

## Medical Abbreviations

In clinical practice, abbreviations are often used in patient progress notes, prescriptions, pharmacy notes, discussions, etc. They are often used by practitioners to save time and can be helpful if you know what they stand for. Occasionally you will see an abbreviation that has more than one meaning, which will cause you to do some deductive reasoning. The list below contains abbreviations commonly used in any medical practice.

The Joint Commission maintains a list of 'do not use' abbreviations. The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) also maintains an even more comprehensive list of 'error-prone' abbreviations. Abbreviations on both of these lists are considered unsafe because they can be confusing and are often misinterpreted, leading to medication errors. The Joint Commission keeps an updated list of these 'do not use' abbreviations on their website (See: [https://www.jointcommission.org/facts\\_about\\_do\\_not\\_use\\_list/](https://www.jointcommission.org/facts_about_do_not_use_list/)). The ISMP also keeps a list of 'error-prone' abbreviations on their website (See: <https://www.ismp.org/tools/errorproneabbreviations.pdf>). However, some physicians still continue to use these abbreviations. As a pharmacist, your ability to recognize these error-prone abbreviations and understand why they are hazardous is essential to avoid such errors and make the appropriate clarifications.

In the future, if you run across an abbreviation you do not know that is not on this list, [www.medilexicon.com](http://www.medilexicon.com) is a good resource to begin your search.

<b>A</b>		ANC	absolute neutrophil count
AAA	abdominal aortic aneurysm	A&O	alert and oriented
ABC	airway, breathing, circulation	AOM	acute otitis media
Abd	abdomen	A/P	assessment and plan
ABG	arterial blood gas	APAP	acetaminophen
ABI	ankle brachial index	aPTT	activated partial thromboplastin
Abx	antibiotics	ARDS	acute respiratory distress syndrome
ACLS	advanced cardiac life support	ASA	aspirin
ADA	American Diabetes Association	ASCVD	atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease
ADD	attention deficit disorder	ATC	around the clock
ADE	adverse drug event		
ADH	antidiuretic hormone	<b>B</b>	
ADHD	attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	BAC	blood alcohol concentration
ADL	activities of daily living	BBB	blood brain barrier
ADE	adverse drug event	BC	birth control
ADR	adverse drug reaction	BG	blood glucose
AED	automated external defibrillator	BIBA	brought in by ambulance
AED	anti-epileptic drug	BKA	below the knee amputation
AF	atrial fibrillation	BLS	basic life support
AFB	acid fast bacilli	BM	bowel movement
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome	BMI	body mass index
AKA	above the knee amputation	BMT	bone marrow transplant
AKI	acute kidney injury	BP	blood pressure
Alb	albumin	BPH	benign prostatic hypertrophy
AMA	against medical advice	BRBPR	bright red blood per rectum
AMI	acute myocardial infarction	BSA	body surface area
AMS	altered mental status	BUN	blood urea nitrogen

<b>C</b>		DVT	deep vein thrombosis
CC	chief complaint	Dx	diagnosis
C/O	complaining of		
CABG	coronary artery bypass graft	<b>E</b>	
CAD	coronary artery disease	eAG	estimated average glucose
CT	computed tomography	EBV	Epstein-Barr virus
CBC	complete blood count	ECF	extracellular fluid
CDC	Centers for Disease Control	ECG	electrocardiogram
CF	cystic fibrosis	EKG	electrocardiogram
CFU	colony forming units	ECHO	echocardiogram
CGM	continuous glucose monitoring	ECT	electroconvulsive therapy
CHF	congestive heart failure	ED	erectile dysfunction
CKD	chronic kidney disease	ED	emergency department
CN	cranial nerves	EEG	electroencephalogram
CO	cardiac output	EF	ejection fraction
COPD	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	EGF	epidermal growth factor
CPK	creatine phosphokinase	EMR	electronic medical record
CPR	cardiopulmonary resuscitation	Endo	endocrine
CrCl	creatinine clearance	ENT	ear, nose, and throat
C&S	culture and sensitivity	EOMI	extraocular muscles intact
CSF	cerebrospinal fluid	EPS	extrapyramidal symptom
CTA	clear to auscultation	ESRD	end-stage renal disease
CTZ	chemoreceptor trigger zone	EtOH	alcohol
CVA	cerebral vascular accident		
CVD	cardiovascular disease	<b>F</b>	
CX	culture	FAS	fetal alcohol syndrome
CXR	chest x-ray	FBG	fasting blood glucose
		FEV	forced expiratory volume
<b>D</b>		FFP	fresh frozen plasma
DC	discontinue	FH	family history
DIC	disseminated intravascular coagulation	FLP	fasting lipid panel
D5W	5% dextrose in water	FSH	follicle stimulating hormone
DKA	diabetic ketoacidosis	FVC	forced vital capacity
DM	diabetes mellitus	Fx	fracture
DMARD	disease modifying antirheumatic drug		
DNR	do not resuscitate	<b>G</b>	
DOB	date of birth	GAD	generalized anxiety disorder
DOC	drug of choice	GERD	gastroesophageal reflux disease
DOE	dyspnea on exertion	GFR	glomerular filtration rate
DOT	directly observed therapy	GI	gastrointestinal
DPI	dry powder inhaler	GSW	gunshot wound
DPN	diabetic peripheral neuropathy	GU	genitourinary
DTs	delirium tremens	GVHD	graft versus host disease
DUR	drug utilization review	Gyn	gynecology

**H**

HA	headache
HB	hemoglobin
HbA1c	glycosylated hemoglobin
HCG	human chorionic gonadotropin
Hct	hematocrit
HDL	high density lipoprotein
HEENT	head, ears, eyes, nose, throat
HF	heart failure
Hgb	hemoglobin
H&H	hemoglobin and hematocrit
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HJR	hepatojugular reflex
HOB	head of bed
H/O	history of
H&P	history and physical exam
HPI	history of present illness
HPV	human papilloma virus
HSV	herpes simplex virus
HTN	hypertension
Hx	history

**I**

IBD	inflammatory bowel disease
IBS	irritable bowel syndrome
IBW	ideal body weight
ICD	implantable cardiac defibrillator
ICF	intracellular fluid
ICP	intracranial pressure
ICU	intensive care unit
I & D	incision and debridement
IDDM	insulin dependent diabetes mellitus
IGT	impaired glucose tolerance
IM	intramuscular
INR	international normalized ratio
I & O	intake and output
IUD	intrauterine device
IV	intravenous
IVP	intravenous push
IVPB	IV piggy back
IVDA	intravenous drug abuser

**J**

JVD	jugular venous distention
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**K**

KUB	kidney, ureter, bladder
KVO	keep vein open

**L**

Lac	laceration
LAD	lymphadenopathy
L&D	labor and delivery
LDL	low density lipoprotein
LFT	liver function test
LH	luteinizing hormone
LLE	left lower extremity
LLL	left lower lobe
LLQ	left lower quadrant
LOC	loss of consciousness
LTAC	long-term acute care
LUE	left upper extremity
LUL	left upper lobe
LV	left ventricle
LVAD	left ventricular assist device
LVH	left ventricular hypertrophy

**M**

MAR	medication administration record
MAP	mean arterial pressure
MCV	mean corpuscular volume
MDI	metered dose inhaler
MI	myocardial infarction
MMR	measles, mumps, rubella (vaccine)
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging
MVA	motor vehicle accident
MVI	multivitamin

**N**

NAD	no acute distress; no apparent distress
NE	norepinephrine
NGT	nasogastric tube
NICU	neonatal intensive care unit
NIDDM	non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus
NKA	no known allergies
NKDA	no known drug allergies
NPO	nothing by mouth
NRT	nicotine replacement therapy
NS	normal saline

NSAID non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug  
 NSR normal sinus rhythm  
 NTND non-tender, non-distended  
 N/V nausea and vomiting  
**O**  
 OA osteoarthritis  
 OB obstetrics  
 OC oral contraceptive  
 OCD obsessive-compulsive disorder  
 OGTT oral glucose tolerance test  
 OOB out of bed  
 OR operating room  
 OTC over the counter  
  
**P**  
 PACU post-anesthesia care unit  
 PAD peripheral arterial disease  
 PCA patient controlled analgesia  
 PCC prothrombin complex concentrate  
 PCN penicillin  
 PCOS polycystic ovarian syndrome  
 PCP primary care physician  
 PE physical exam  
 PE pulmonary embolism  
 PEG percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy  
 PERRLA pupils equal, round, reactive to light and accommodation  
 PFT pulmonary function test  
 PICC peripherally inserted central catheter  
 PID pelvic inflammatory disease  
 PMH past medical history  
 PND paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea  
 PPD packs per day  
 PPD purified protein derivative (of tuberculin)  
 PRBC packed red blood cells  
 PUD peptic ulcer disease  
 PSA prostate specific antigen  
 PT prothrombin time  
 PTT partial thromboplastin time  
 PTA prior to admission  
 PTA prior to arrival  
 PTSD post-traumatic stress disorder  
 PVD peripheral vascular disease  
 PCWP pulmonary capillary wedge pressure

**R**  
 RA rheumatoid arthritis  
 RBC red blood cell/count  
 RDA recommended daily allowance  
 REM rapid eye movement  
 RLE right lower extremity  
 RLL right lower lobe  
 RLQ right lower quadrant  
 ROM range of motion  
 ROS review of systems  
 RR respiratory rate  
 RRR regular rate and rhythm  
 RUE right upper extremity  
 RUL right upper lobe  
 RUQ right upper quadrant  
 RT respiratory therapy  
  
**S**  
 2/2 secondary to  
 SAD seasonal affective disorder  
 SBP systolic blood pressure  
 SCr serum creatinine  
 SE side effect  
 SH social history  
 SMBG self monitoring of blood glucose  
 SNF skilled nursing facility  
 SOAP subjective, objective, assessment, plan  
 SOB shortness of breath  
 STI sexually transmitted infection  
 S/Sx signs and symptoms  
 stat immediately, at once  
 Sx symptoms  
 Sz seizure  
  
**T**  
 TAH total abdominal hysterectomy  
 TB tuberculosis  
 TC total cholesterol  
 TdP torsades de pointes  
 TF tube feeds  
 TG triglycerides  
 TIA transient ischemic attack  
 TKO to keep open  
 TNF tumor necrosis factor

TPN total parenteral nutrition  
TSH thyroid stimulating hormone

**U**

UA urinalysis  
UC ulcerative colitis  
UE upper extremity  
ULQ upper left quadrant  
UOP urine output  
URI upper respiratory tract infection  
UTI urinary tract infection

**V**

VS vital signs  
VSS vital signs stable

**W**

WBAT weight bearing as tolerate  
WBC white blood cell  
WDWN Well developed, well nourished  
WNL within normal limits  
w/o without

**Y**

yo years old