

# Chapter 3

## MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY AND ABBREVIATIONS

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- The following list contains some of the most common abbreviations found in medical records. Please note that in
- medical terminology, the capitalization of letters bears significance as to the meaning of certain terms, and is often
- used to distinguish terms with similar acronyms.
- @—at
- **A & P—anatomy and physiology**
- ab—abortion
- abd—abdominal
- ABG—arterial blood gas
- a.c.—before meals
- ac & cl—acetest and clinitest
- ACLS—advanced cardiac life support
- AD—right ear
- ADL—activities of daily living
- ad lib—as desired
- adm—admission
- afeb—afebrile, no fever
- AFB—acid-fast bacillus
- AKA—above the knee
- alb—albumin
- alt dieb—alternate days (every other day)
- am—morning
- AMA—against medical advice
- amal—amalgam
- amb—ambulate, walk
- AMI—acute myocardial infarction

- amt—amount
- ANS—automatic nervous system
- ant—anterior
- AOx3—alert and oriented to person, time, and place
- Ap—apical
- AP—apical pulse
- approx—approximately
- aq—aqueous
- ARDS—acute respiratory distress syndrome
- AS—left ear
- ASA—aspirin
- asap (ASAP)—as soon as possible
- as tol—as tolerated
- ATD—admission, transfer, discharge
- AU—both ears
- Ax—axillary
- BE—barium enema
- bid—twice a day
- bil, bilateral—both sides
- BK—below knee
- BKA—below the knee amputation
- bl—blood
- bl wk—blood work
- BLS—basic life support
- BM—bowel movement
- BOW—bag of waters
- B/P—blood pressure
- bpm—beats per minute
- BR—bed rest

- BRP—bathroom privileges
- BS—breath sounds
- BSI—body substance isolation
- BSO—bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy
- BUN—blood, urea, nitrogen levels
- BVM—bag-valve-mask
- bx—biopsy
- c—with
- C & S—culture and sensitivity
- c-spine—cervical spine
- CA—cancer
- CAD—coronary artery disease
- cal—calorie
- CAT—computerized axial tomography
- cath—catheter
- CBC—complete blood count
- cc—cubic centimeters
- CC—chief complaint
- CCU—coronary care unit, critical care unit

- CHD—coronary heart disease
- CHF—congestive heart failure
- CHO—carbohydrate
- chol—cholesterol
- circ—circumcision
- cl liq—clear liquid
- CNS—central nervous system
- c/o—complains of
- COPD—chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- CPK—creatine phosphokinase
- CPR—cardiopulmonary resuscitation
- CPT—chest physical therapy
- CS—central supply
- CSF—cerebrospinal fluid
- CT—computer tomography
- CVA—cerebrovascular accident (

- DC—discontinue or discharge
- del—delivery
- Del. Rm.—delivery room
- diff—differential
- DNA—deoxyribonucleic acid
- DNR—do not resuscitate
- DOA—dead on arrival
- DOB—date of birth
- DPT—diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus
- DRG—diagnosis-related grouping
- D/S—dextrose in saline
- DT's—delirium tremens
- DW—distilled water
- D5W 5%—dextrose in water
- Dx—diagnosis
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- EBL—estimated blood loss
- ECG—electrocardiogram
- ED—emergency department
- EEG—electroencephalogram
- EENT—eyes, ears, nose, throat
- EKG—electrocardiogram
- EMG—electromyogram
- EOA—esophageal obturator  
airway
- ESR—erythrocyte sedimentation  
rate
- est—estimated
- ER—emergency room
- ET—endotracheal
- ETA—estimated time of arrival
- etiol—etiology
- ETOH—ethyl alcohol, intoxicated
- exam—examination
- exp—exploratory
- ext—external, extract, extraction
- FBOA—foreign body obstructed  
airway

- FBW—fasting blood work
- FF (F. FI)—force fluids
- FH—family history
- FHS—fetal heart sounds
- FHT—fetal heart tone
- FIFO—first in, first out
- FSH—follicle-stimulating hormone
- ft—foot
- FUO—fever of undetermined origin
- Fx—fracture
- GB—gallbladder
- GI—gastrointestinal
- GU—genitourinary
- GTT—glucose tolerance test (pancreas test)
- gtt(s)—drop(s)
- gyn—gynecology
- H & H—hemoglobin and hematocrit
- HCG—human chorionic gonadotrophin
- hct—hematocrit
- HDL—high-density lipoprotein
- hgb—hemoglobin
- HOB—head of bed
- hr (h)—hour
- HIV—human immunodeficiency virus
- H&P—history and physical
- HR—heart rate
- hs—hour of sleep, bedtime
- ht—height
- Hx—history
- hypo—hypodermic injection
- hyst—hysterectomy
- IBS—irritable bowel syndrome
- I & D—incision and drainage
- I & O—intake and output

- ICP—intracranial pressure
- ICU—intensive care unit
- IM—intramuscular
- ing—inguinal
- inj—injection
- IPPB—intermittent positive pressure breathing
- irrig—irrigation
- IS—intercostal space
- isol—isolation
- IT—inhalation therapy
- IUD—intrauterine device
- IV—intravenous
- IVF—in vitro fertilization
- IVP—intravenous pyelogram
- K+—potassium
- KCl—potassium chloride
- KUB—kidney, ureter, bladder
- L—lumbar
- L & D—labor and delivery

- lac—laceration
- lab—laboratory
- lap—laparotomy
- lat—lateral
- LD—lethal dose
- LDH—lactic dehydrogenase
- LDL—low-density lipoprotein
- liq—liquid
- LLQ, LLL—left lower quadrant (abdomen), lobe (lung)
- LMP—last menstrual period
- LOC—level of consciousness
- LP—lumbar puncture
- Lt—left
- LUQ, LUL—left upper quadrant (abdomen), lobe (lung)
- MA—mental age
- MAST—medical antishock trousers
- MCI—mass casualty incident
- meds—medications
- MI—myocardial infarction



- MA—mental age
- MAST—medical antishock trousers
- MCI—mass casualty incident
- meds—medications
- MI—myocardial infarction
- MICU—mobile intensive care unit
- min—minute
- MN—midnight
- MOM—milk of magnesia
- MRI—magnetic resonance imagery
- MS—morphine sulfate, multiple sclerosis
- MVA—motor vehicle accident
- NVD—nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Na<sup>+</sup>—sodium
- NaCl—sodium chloride
- N/C—nasal cannula
- no—complaints

- NS—normal saline
- nsg—nursing
- NSR—normal sinus rhythm
- NVS—neurological vital signs
- O—oxygen
- OB—obstetrics
- OD—right eye, overdose
- oint—ointment
- OOB—out of bed
- OPD—outpatient department
- OR—operating room
- ord—orderly
- ORTH—orthopedics
- ortho—correct, right (bones)
- os—mouth
- OS—left eye
- OT—occupational therapy
- OU—both eyes
- oz—ounce
- p—after
- P—pulse
- P & A—percussion and auscultation

- PAC—premature atrial contraction
- palp—palpation
- PAR—post-anesthesia room
- PAT—paroxysmal atrial tachycardia
- pc—after meals
- pCO<sub>2</sub>—partial pressure of carbon dioxide
- PDR—physician's desk reference
- PE—physical exam, pulmonary embolism
- PEDS—pediatrics
- per—by or through
- PERL(A)—pupils equal and reactive to light (and accommodation)
- PET—positron emission tomography
- PH—past history
- pH—hydrogen ion concentration
- PID—pelvic inflammatory disease
- PKU—phenylketonuria
- pm—between noon and midnight
- PNS—peripheral nervous system
- po—by mouth
- post (pos)—posterior
- postop, PostOp—postoperative
- pp (p.p.)—postprandial (after eating)

- po—by mouth
- post (pos)—posterior
- postop, PostOp—postoperative
- pp (p.p.)—postprandial (after eating)
- pO<sub>2</sub>—partial pressure of oxygen
- PPD—purified protein derivative (TB test)
- preop, PreOp—before surgery
- prn—as needed, whenever necessary
- pro time—prothrombin time
- pt—patient, pint
- PT—physical therapy
- PTT—partial prothromboplastin time
- PVC—premature ventricular contraction
- Px—physical exam, prognosis
- q—every
- qd—every day
- qh—every hour
- q2h, q3h, ...—every two hours, every three hours, ...

- qhs—every night at bedtime
- qid—four times a day
- qns—quantity not sufficient
- qod—every other day
- qs—quantity sufficient
- r (R)—rectal
- R (resp)—respirations, rectal
- RAIU—radioactive iodine uptake study
- RBC—red blood cell/count
- reg—regular
- Rh—rhesus
- RK—radial keratotomy
- RL—ringer's lactate
- RLQ, RLL—right lower quadrant (abdomen), lobe (lung)
- RML—right middle lobe (lung)
- RO—reality orientation
- R/O—rule out
- ROM—range of motion
- R.R.—recovery room
- RUQ, RLL—right upper quadrant, lobe

- RUQ, RLL—right upper quadrant, lobe
- rt—right
- RV—residual volume
- Rx—take (prescription)
- s—without
- S & S—signs and symptoms
- ss—1/2
- Sats—oxygen/blood saturation level
- SA—sinoatrial
- SB—small bowel
- sc—subcutaneous
- SGOT—serum glutamic oxaloacetic transaminase
- SGPT—serum glutamic pyruvic transaminase
- SIDS—sudden infant death syndrome
- Sig:—label/write
- SL—sublingual
- SMAC—sequential multiple analysis computer
- SOB—shortness of breath
- spec—specimen
- sp. gr.—specific gravity
- SQ, sub q—subcutaneous
- SSE—soap suds enema

- stat—immediately
- STD—sexually transmitted disease
- STH—somatotropic hormone
- SVD—spontaneous vaginal delivery
- SVN—small volume nebulizer
- SVT—supraventricular tachycardia
- Sx—symptoms
- T—temperature, thoracic
- T & A—tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy
- tab—tablet
- tachy—tachycardic
- TAH—total abdominal hysterectomy
- TB—tuberculosis
- TCDB—turn, cough, deep breath
- temp (T)—temperature
- TH—thyroid hormone
- TIA—transient ischemic attack
- tid—three times a day
- TMJ—temporomandibular joint
- tol—tolerated
- TPN—total parenteral nutrition
- TPR—temperature, pulse, respirations
- tr—tincture
- trach—tracheotomy, tracheostomy
- TSH—thyroid-stimulating hormone
- TT—tetanus toxiod
- TUR—transurethral resection
- TV—tidal volume
- TVH—total vaginal hysterectomy
- TX—traction
- UA—urinalysis
- umb—umbilicus
- unc.—unconscious
- ung—ointment
- unk—unknown

- URC—usual, reasonable, customary
- URI—upper respiratory infection
- US—ultrasonic
- UTI—urinary tract infection
- V fib—ventricular fibrillation
- V tach—ventricular tachycardia
- vag—vaginal
- VC—vital capacity
- VD—venereal disease
- vit—vitamin
- vo—verbal order
- vol—volume
- V/S—vital signs
- WA—while awake
- WBC—white blood cell/count
- w/c—wheelchair
- WNL—within normal limits
- wt—weight
- y/o—year(s) old