

Latin Terms and Common Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Latin	Meaning	Possible confusion
aa	ana	of each	
AAA		apply to affected area	
a.c.	ante cibum	before meals	
a.d.	auris dextra	right ear	"a" can be mistaken as an "o" which could read "o.d.", meaning right eye
ad lib.	ad libitum	use as much as one desires; freely	
admov.	admove	apply	
agit	agita	stir/shake	
alt. h.	alternis horis	every other hour	
a.m.m.	ad manu medicae	at doctor's hand	
a.m.	ante meridiem	morning, before noon	
amp		ampule	
amt		amount	
aq	aqua	water	
a.l., a.s.	auris laeva, auris sinistra	left ear	"a" can be mistaken as an "o" which could read "o.s." or "o.l.", meaning left eye
A.T.C.		around the clock	
a.u.	auris utraque	both ears	"a" can be mistaken as an "o" which could read "o.u.", meaning both eyes
BDS/bds	bis die sumendum	twice daily	
bis	bis	twice	
b.i.d./b.d.	bis in die	twice daily	AMA style avoids use of this abbreviation (spell out "twice a day")
B.M.		bowel movement	
BNF		British National Formulary	
bol.	bolus	as a large single dose (usually intravenously)	
B.S.		blood sugar	
B.S.A		body surface areas	
b.t.		bedtime	mistaken for "b.i.d", meaning twice daily
BUCC	bucca	inside cheek	
cap., caps.	capsula	capsule	
c, c.	cum	with (usually written with a bar on top of the "c")	
cib.	cibus	food	
cc	cum cibo	with food, (but also cubic centimetre)	mistaken for "U", meaning units; also has an ambiguous meaning; use "mL" or "milliliters"
cf		with food; also cf. means confer=compare	
comp.		compound	
cr., crm		cream	
CST		Continue same treatment	
D or d		days or doses	ambiguous meaning, write out "days" or "doses"
D5W		dextrose 5% solution (sometimes written as D5W)	
D5NS		dextrose 5% in normal saline (0.9%)	
D.A.W.		dispense as written (i.e., no generic substitution)	
dc, D/C, disc		discontinue or discharge	ambiguous meaning
dieb. alt.	diebus alternis	every other day	
dil.		dilute	
disp.		dispersible or dispense	

div.		divide	
dL		deciliter	
d.t.d.	dentur tales doses	give of such doses	
DTO		deodorized tincture of opium	can easily be confused with "diluted tincture of opium," which is 1/25th the strength of deodorized tincture of opium; deaths have resulted due to massive morphine overdose[4]
D.W.		distilled water	
elix.		elixir	
e.m.p.	ex modo prescripto	as directed	
emuls.	emulsum	emulsion	
et	et	and	
eod		every other day	
ex aq	ex aqua	in water	
fl., fld.		fluid	
ft.	fiat	make; let it be made	
g		gram	
gr		grain	
gtt(s)	gutta(e)	drop(s)	
H		hypodermic	
h, hr	hora	hour	
h.s.	hora somni (at the hour of sleep)	at bedtime or half-strength	ambiguous (two meanings, easily conflated); spell out
ID		intra dermal	
IJ, inj	injectio	injection	mistaken for "IV", meaning intravenously
IM		intramuscular (with respect to injections)	
IN		intranasal	mistaken for "IM", meaning intramuscular, or "IV", meaning intravenously
IP		intra peritoneal	
IT		intra thecal	mistaken for other abbreviations; spell out
IU		international unit	mistaken for "IV" or "10", spell out "international unit"
IV		intravenous	
IVP		intravenous push	
IVPB		intravenous piggyback	
kg		kilogram	
L.A.S.		label as such	
LCD		coal tar solution	
lin	linimentum	liniment	
liq	liquor	solution	
lot.		lotion	
MAE		Moves All Extremities	
mane	mane	in the morning	
M.	misce	mix	
m, min	minimum	a minimum	
mcg		microgram	Recommended replacement for "µg" which may be confused with "mg"
m.d.u.	more dicto utendus	to be used as directed	
mEq		milliequivalent	
mg		milligram	
mg/dL		milligrams per deciliter	

MgSO4		magnesium sulfate	may be confused with "MSO4", spell out "magnesium sulfate"
mist.	mistura	mix	
mitte	mitte	send	
mL		millilitre	
MS		morphine sulfate or magnesium sulfate	can mean either morphine sulfate or magnesium sulfate, spell out either
MSO4		morphine sulfate	may be confused with "MgSO4", spell out "morphine sulfate"
nebul	nebula	a spray	
N.M.T.		not more than	
noct.	nocte	at night	
non rep.	non repetatur	no repeats	
NPO	nil per os	nothing by mouth	AMA style avoids use of this abbreviation (spell out "nothing by mouth")
NS		normal saline (0.9%)	
1/2NS		half normal saline (0.45%)	
N.T.E.		not to exceed	
o_2		both eyes, sometimes written as o2	
od	omne in die	every day/once daily (preferred to qd in the UK[5])	
od	oculus dexter	right eye	"o" can be mistaken as an "a" which could read "a.d.", meaning right ear, confusion with omne in die
om	omne mane	every morning	
on	omne nocte	every night	
o.p.d.		once per day	
o.s.	oculus sinister	left eye	"o" can be mistaken as an "a" which could read "a.s.", meaning left ear
o.u.	oculus uterque	both eyes	"o" can be mistaken as an "a" which could read "a.u.", meaning both ears
oz		ounce	
per	per	by or through	
p.c.	post cibum	after meals	
pig./pigm.	pigmentum	paint	
p.m.	post meridiem	evening or afternoon	
p.o.	per os	by mouth or orally	AMA style avoids use of this abbreviation (spell out "orally")
p.r. or PR	per rectum	by rectum	
PRN, prn	pro re nata	as needed	
pulv.	pulvis	powder	
PV	per vaginam	via the vagina	
q	quaque	every, per	
q.a.d.	quaque alternis die	every other day	
q.a.m.	quaque die ante meridiem	every day before noon	
q.d./q.1.d.	quaque die	every day	mistaken for "QOD" or "qds," spell out "every day" or "daily". AMA style avoids use of this abbreviation (spell out "every day")
q.d.s.	quater die sumendus	four times a day	can be mistaken for "qd" (every day)
q.p.m.	quaque die post meridiem	every day after noon or every evening	
q.h.	quaque hora	every hour	
q.h.s.	quaque hora somni	every night at bedtime	
q.1 h, q.1°	quaque 1 hora	every 1 hour; (can replace "1" with other numbers)	
q.i.d.	quater in die	four times a day	can be mistaken for "qd" or "qod," write out "4 times a day". AMA style avoids use of this abbreviation (spell out "4 times a day")
q4PM		at 4pm	mistaken to mean every four hours

q.o.d.		every other day	mistaken for "QD," spell out "every other day". AMA style avoids use of this abbreviation (spell out "every other day")
qqh	quater quaque hora	every four hours	
q.s.	quantum sufficiat	a sufficient quantity	
QWK		every week	
rep., rept.	repetatur	repeats	
RL, R/L		Ringer's lactate	
s	sine	without (usually written with a bar on top of the "s")	
s.a.	secundum artem	according to the art (accepted practice); use your judgement	
SC, subc, subcut, subq, SQ		subcutaneous	"SC" can be mistaken for "SL," meaning sublingual; "SQ" can be mistaken for "5Q" meaning five every dose
s.i.d/SID	semel in die	once a day	used exclusively in veterinary medicine
sig	signa	write on label	
SL		sublingually, under the tongue	
S.O.B, SOB		shortness of breath	
sol	solutio	solution	
s.o.s., si op. sit	si opus sit	if there is a need	
ss	semis	one half or sliding scale	mistaken for "55" or "1/2"
SSI, SSRI		sliding scale insulin or sliding scale regular insulin	mistaken to mean "strong solution of iodine" or "selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor"
SNRI (antidepressant)		Serotonin–norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor	
SSRI (antidepressant)		selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (a specific class of antidepressant)	
stat	statim	immediately	
SubQ		subcutaneously	
supp	suppositorium	suppository	
susp		suspension	
syr	syrupus	syrup	
tab	tabella	tablet	
tal., t	talus	such	
tbsp		tablespoon	
t.d.s./TDS	ter die sumendum	three times a day	
t.i.d.	ter in die	three times a day	AMA style avoids use of this abbreviation (spell out "3 times a day")
t.i.w.		three times a week	mistaken for twice a week
top.		topical	
T.P.N.		total parenteral nutrition	
tr, tinc., tinct.		tincture	
troche	trochiscus	lozenge	
tsp		teaspoon	
U		unit	mistaken for a "4", "0" or "cc", spell out "unit"
u.d., ut. dict.	ut dictum	as directed	
ung.	unguentum	ointment	
U.S.P.		United States Pharmacopoeia	
vag		vaginally	
w		with	
w/a		while awake	
wf		with food (with meals)	

w/o, s		without	
X		times	
Y.O.		years old	
µg		microgram	mistaken for "mg", meaning milligram
List of symbols used in prescriptions			
Symbols	Latin	Meaning	Possible confusion
@		at	mistaken for "2"; spell out "at"
>		greater than	mistaken for a "7"
<		less than	mistaken for an "L"
℞	recipe	take, take this, or take thus	