

Do Not Use Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Potential Problem	Preferred Term
U (for unit)	Mistaken as zero, four or cc.	Write "unit"
IU (for international unit)	Mistaken as IV (intravenous) or 10 (ten).	Write "international unit"
Q.D., Q.O.D., O.D.	Mistaken for each other. The period after the Q can be mistaken for an "I" and the "O" can be mistaken for "I".	Write "daily" and "every other day"
Trailing zero (X.0 mg), Lack of leading zero (.X mg)	Decimal point is missed. Many serious errors are due to this problem.	Never write a zero by itself after a decimal point (X mg), and always use a zero before a decimal point (0.X mg)
MS, MgSO₄, MSO₄	Confused for one another. Can mean morphine sulfate or magnesium sulfate.	Write "morphine sulfate" or "magnesium sulfate"
& (ampersand)	Mistaken for "8" or other number.	Use "and"
HS meaning "half strength"	Mistaken for QHS (bedtime)	Use HS only for bedtime dose of medication
µg (micrograms)	Mistaken for milligrams.	Write out "micrograms" in the rare instances when this is needed.

Do not use any of these abbreviations in any written chart documentation, including orders, progress notes, nursing notes, etc.