

Loyola University Health System

List of Unacceptable Medical Record Abbreviations and Medication Dose Designation

Purpose: Use of certain abbreviations and medication dose designations can be dangerous and lead to treatment errors. This list of unacceptable abbreviations and dose designations identifies specific abbreviations and medication dose designations that have been in use, but have been found to create the potential for error. **THE ABBREVIATIONS AND MEDICATION DOSE DESIGNATIONS LISTED BELOW MAY NOT BE USED.**

Abbreviation or Dose Designation	Reason	Acceptable Practice	Rational for Selection
Do not use "U" as an abbreviation for "Units"	"U" can be confused with a "0" or a "4"	Write out the word "Units"	Frequently used, high risk drugs (heparin and insulin are ordered in units. Identified as unsafe by the ISMP*.
Do not use IU (for international unit)	Mistaken as IV (intravenous) or 10 (ten).	Write "international unit"	Identified as unsafe by the ISMP*.
Do not use Q.D., Q.O.D. (Latin abbreviation for once daily and every other day)	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"	Identified as unsafe by the ISMP*.
Do not use "µg" for microgram	Misinterpretation as "mg"	Write "mcg" for microgram	Used frequently for dosing in infants and children. Identified as unsafe by the ISMP*.
Do not use trailing zeros (1.0)	Misread as 10 if the decimal is not seen	Write numerals without the decimal point Write 1 mg, not 1.0 mg	Potential for ten-fold dosing errors. Identified as unsafe by the ISMP*.
Do not use leading decimals (.1)	Misread as 1 if the decimal is not seen	Write numerals as 0.1 mg, not .1 mg	Potential for ten-fold dosing errors. Identified as unsafe by the ISMP*.
Do not use MS04 or MS for morphine	Misread as magnesium sulfate	Write morphine	Frequently used in high-risk situations. Identified as unsafe by the ISMP*.
Do not use MgS04 for magnesium sulfate	Misread as morphine sulfate	Write magnesium sulfate (the salt matters)	Frequently used in high-risk situations. Identified as unsafe by the ISMP*.
AZT	Mistaken as azathioprine or aztreonam	Use complete drug name	Identified as unsafe by the ISMP*.
HCTZ	Mistaken as hydrocortisone (seen as HCT250 mg)	Use complete drug name	Identified as unsafe by the ISMP*.
T3	Mistaken as liothyronine	Use complete drug name	Identified as unsafe by the ISMP*.

*ISMP is the Institute for Safe Medication Practices