

MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY ABBREVIATIONS

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 (stroke)
CVU—cardiovascular unit
cx—cervix or complaint of
CXR—chest X ray
cysto—cystography
d/c—discontinue
D & C—dilation and curettage
DAT—diet as tolerated
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

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
etiolo—etiology
ETOH—ethyl alcohol, intoxicated
exam—examination
exp—exploratory
ext—external, extract, extraction
FBOA—foreign body obstructed airway
FBS—fasting blood sugar
FBW—fasting blood work
FF (F. Fl)—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
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+—sodium
NaCl—sodium chloride
N/C—nasal cannula
no—complaints
neg—negative
neuro—neurology
NG—nasogastric
NGT—nasogastric tube
nitro—nitroglycerine
NKA—no known allergies
noc (t)—night
NPO—nothing by mouth

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
pCO₂—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)
pO₂—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
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—somatotrophic 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
ur—urine
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