



Transcription Style Guide

Version 1.1

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READ ME - TRANSCRIPTION STYLE GUIDE

PROPER USAGE - DISCLAIMER

Customer-requested formats and/or styles *always* take precedence over the information contained within this transcription style guide. Exceptions will be noted in the individual account instructions/client profiles and the user is expected to adhere to those customer-defined rules.

This transcription style guide is to be used by all employees across all accounts and platforms. It is intended to be a ready reference, providing clarification and focus to *The AAMT Book of Style for Medical Transcription*, Second Edition, as well as clarification surrounding certain corporate policies, i.e., editing protocol, risk management, etc. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive reference, nor is it meant to replace customer-requested formats or style.

Any items not specifically addressed in this style guide or in the account instructions/client profile should be transcribed as dictated utilizing appropriate reference materials, including but not limited to, *The AAMT Book of Style for Medical Transcription*, Second Edition.

Refer to DQS, Cornerstone, FLO, etc., user guides for platform-specific information.

Note: This document is *not* to be used to assign points-weighted errors, should an acceptable alternate style be used in transcribing or editing a document.

HOW TO NAVIGATE WITHIN THIS DOCUMENT

- Table of contents is an alphabetized list by topic. Click on the topic to jump directly to that section. Click on the *Return to Table of Contents* hyperlink at the bottom of each page to jump back to the Table of Contents.
- Use Ctrl+F to search for specific whole words or partial words. Note: Partial word searches may return more results. For example, searching for *hyphen* will provide results for *hyphen*, *hyphens*, and *hyphenate*.
- Hyperlinks are available throughout the document. Click on the link to jump to a section that may contain additional relevant information.
- Appendices are provided for acceptable terms, unacceptable terms, prohibited abbreviations, and sound-alike terms.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GENERAL RULES

Abbreviations and acronyms are to be transcribed as dictated, *except* in the following instances:

- Follow *The Joint Commission - Do Not Use List* for prohibited/dangerous abbreviations (see [Appendix C](#)) unless otherwise noted in the account instructions/client profile.
- **Diagnostic headings:** Assessment/Impression, Conclusion (of consultation), or Diagnosis(es)
Under diagnostic headings, expand only disease-related abbreviations or acronyms. Nondisease acronyms or abbreviations for procedures, tests, measurements, etc., are transcribed as dictated.

Example:

D: Impression: CAD status post cabbage, hypertension, COPD, and type two diabetes.

T: Impression: Coronary artery disease status post CABG, hypertension, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and type 2 diabetes.

NEC and NOS are qualifications of a diagnostic statement and should be expanded.

Examples:

D: Diagnosis: Psychotic disorder, NOS.

T: Diagnosis: Psychotic disorder, not otherwise specified.

D: Diagnosis: Drug-induced headache, NEC.

T: Diagnosis: Drug-induced headache, not elsewhere classified.

- **Operation or Procedure title heading:**

Under operation or procedure title heading expand all abbreviations or acronyms.

Example:

D: Procedure: CABG

T: Procedure: Coronary artery bypass graft.

Acronyms

Transcribe in all capitals, without punctuation, unless the acronym should be expanded as described above.

Examples:

AIDS, CABG, PERRLA, SOAP, TURP, SMAC

Drug Trade Name

Do not expand when an abbreviation is part of the drug trade (brand) name.

Examples:

Diovan HCT (do not expand HCT to hydrochlorothiazide)

Glucophage XR (do not expand XR to Extended Release)

Note: Dictated "pen VK" would be expanded to Penicillin VK as the latter is the correct drug name.

Multiple Meanings

Expand only when the meaning is clear. When an abbreviation or acronym can have multiple meanings and you are not sure which is intended, transcribe as dictated, e.g., ASHD, CLL, TTE.

Plural Acronyms and Plural Abbreviations

If an acronym or abbreviation is dictated in the plural form, add a lowercase "s" without an apostrophe. If the acronym or abbreviation is lowercase, add an apostrophe "s." If the abbreviation is mixed case, e.g., A1c, form the plural by adding an apostrophe "s."

Examples:

RBCs, rbc's, WBCs, wbc's, A1c's

Exception: Single-letter abbreviations do require an apostrophe "s."

Example: I's and O's.

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LATIN ABBREVIATIONS

It is acceptable to combine Latin and English expressions, if dictated.

Examples:

q. day, q. week

Use a comma both before and after a Latin expression, except when listing drugs and dosing instructions.

Example:

I will see the patient when she returns from her vacation, i.e., in 2 weeks.

Use lowercase lettering with periods after each letter for acceptable Latin drug abbreviations. Do not use lowercase without periods, as these terms may then be misread as words. Avoid using capital letters.

Examples:

b.i.d., t.i.d., q.i.d., p.r.n.

METRIC/SI ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviate all metric/SI units of measure that follow numerals: cc (cubic centimeters), mcg (micrograms), mL (milliliters), g (grams), etc. Do not abbreviate if no number is dictated.

Examples:

Prostate measured 30 g and appeared normal.

The difference was less than a centimeter.

Transcribe quantities of I's and O's as cc, unless mL is dictated.

STANDARD (NONMETRIC) MEASUREMENTS

See [standard \(nonmetric\)](#) measurements.

AGES

Arabic numerals are preferred for transcribing ages.

Examples:

The patient is a 12-year-old male.

12-year-old Michael was admitted to the ER.

The patient is a 7-year 7-month-old (or 7-year-7-month-old) female.

BRIEF FORMS/SLANG

SLANG

Expand dictated slang at medical points of reference (appendectomy *not* appy, H influenza *not* H flu). For a list of commonly misused, unacceptable terms, see [Appendix A](#).

Slang is informal nonstandard vocabulary composed of coined words or arbitrarily changed words that cannot be found in an English or medical reference. Not to be confused with [neologisms](#).

BRIEF (SHORT) FORMS

Commonly used brief forms of laboratory terms may be transcribed as dictated, e.g., eos, basos, segs, polys, etc., except in headings, diagnoses, or operative titles.

If a term can be documented as a stand-alone word, e.g., phone, exam, lab, etc., it is not considered a brief form. For a list of commonly used acceptable terms, see [Appendix B](#).

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NEOLOGISMS

Transcribe as dictated.

Neologisms are newly formed words; nouns that have been converted to verbs by adding a suffix; terms that have been combined in an unorthodox fashion; invented terms that dictators use to convey information with as few words as possible.

Examples:

spasming, mucousy, mucusy, arousable, pupilloplasty, stridorous, liganclipped, satting (O2 sat), boviied, prepped, cathed, hyperreflexivity, neuromusculoskeletal, genitoperineal, lumbalgia, crepittance, neuroforaminal.

CAPITALIZATION

DEPARTMENT NAMES

The *general rule* is that department names are not capitalized.

HINT: If the department name is preceded by an article, it is not capitalized.

Examples:

The cardiology service was consulted.

An orthopedics consult was requested.

Exception: Capitalize department names when mentioned as entities.

HINT: Substitute a noun, such as "Dr. Smith." If you can replace the name of the department with "Dr. Smith" and the sentence still makes sense grammatically, it is being used as an entity and is capitalized.

Examples:

The patient was monitored by Anesthesia.

The specimen was sent to Pathology.

ROOMS OR LOCATIONS

Divisions or specific locations within departments are not capitalized (e.g., the emergency room, the operating room, etc.).

Examples:

The emergency room was fast and efficient.

Patient taken to recovery room after procedure.

BUSINESS NAMES

Capitalize all words in business names except for articles and prepositions (Hospital Corporation of America), or use the corporate spelling (DuPont, eBay). Capitalize the words Association, Company, Institution, or Organization only if those words are part of the business name (American Hospital Association, Starbucks Corporation).

PROPER NAMES

Capitalize names of hospitals, clinics, office buildings, and businesses representing proper nouns and official names.

Examples:

The patient attended Greenville Physical Therapy for her rehabilitation.

She was treated at General Hospital a few weeks ago for similar complaints.

He has an appointment next week at the Oak Street Family Medicine Clinic.

CLASSIFICATIONS/TERMINOLOGY (by specialty or disease)

CARDIOLOGY

ECG or EKG

Transcribe as dictated; both terms are acceptable.

Leads

Bipolar leads: Use roman numerals (I, II, III).

Limb leads: Formatted as aVR, aVL, aVF, etc.

Precordial leads: Use a capital V, followed by an arabic numeral (V3, V4, etc.)

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Heart Murmurs

Use arabic numerals to designate heart murmurs.

When describing heart murmur grades, a virgule (slash) is used to separate the grade from the scale.

Example:

D: a grade two over six soft holosystolic murmur

T: a grade 2/6 soft holosystolic murmur

Progressive murmurs: Never replace the word “to” with a hyphen when transcribing a progressive heart murmur range.

Example:

D: a two to three over six murmur

T: a 2/6 to 3/6 murmur *or* a 2 to 3 over 6 murmur

Additional Cardiology Formats

New York Heart Association (NYHA) class I through class IV

TIMI grade 0 through grade 3

Tracing: Apostrophe symbol may be used to represent the word “prime” when dictated to describe cardiology tracing.

Example:

D: R prime wave.

T: R' wave *or* r' wave

DERMATOLOGY

Breslow thickness (in mm)

Decubitus ulcers stage I through stage IV

DIABETES

Use arabic numerals: type 1 and type 2

Note: Transcribe “type 3” diabetes if dictated; however, this is considered nonstandard usage. The American Diabetes Association refers to this as gestational diabetes.

NEUROLOGY

Glasgow coma scale score 0 through 15

Kurtzke disability score (for multiple sclerosis) score 0 to 10

OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY

GPA

Acronym that stands for gravida (G), para (P), and abortus (A or Ab). Transcribe as dictated. Use commas to separate terms/abbreviations in the GPA system. Use arabic numerals.

Examples: G3, P2, A1 *or* gravida 3, para 2, abortus 1.

TPAL

Acronym that stands for term infants (T), premature infants (P), abortions (A), and living children (L). Transcribe as dictated. Separate numbers with hyphens, not commas. Use arabic numerals.

Example: Obstetric History: 3-1-0-4.

GPA and TPAL Combined

Some dictators combine the GPA and TPAL systems. Transcribe as dictated. Use arabic numerals.

Examples:

gravida 4, 4-0-0-4

gravida 4, para 4-0-0-4

G4, P4-0-0-4

gravida 4-0-0-4

Apgar Scores

Use numerals for ratings and spell out minutes.

Example:

The Apgar scores were 6 and 9 at one and five minutes.

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Gestational Age

Gestational age is measured in weeks and fractions of weeks. Transcribe as dictated.

Examples:

- D: Gestational age is thirty-two and four sevenths weeks.
- T: Gestational age is 32-4/7 weeks.
- D: Gestational age is forty plus three weeks.
- T: Gestational age is 40 plus 3 weeks.
- D: Gestational age is thirty-seven and two weeks.
- T: Gestational age is 37 and 2 weeks.

Adnexa vs. Adnexum

The definition of adnexa is “associated structures.” In gynecology, adnexa refers to an ovary, its tube, and associated ligaments. It is always plural, whether referring to a single side or both sides. When an author dictates “right adnexa” or “left adnexa,” transcribe as dictated; do not change the dictated “adnexa” to “adnexum.”

ONCOLOGY (Cancer Classifications)

Stage and Grade

Stage and grade are not capitalized except at the beginning of a sentence.

Cancer stages are expressed with roman numerals: stage 0, I, II, III, IV

Cancer grades are expressed with arabic numerals: grade 1, 2, 3, 4

TNM

Tumor, node, and metastasis (TNM) classification format: T1a N0 MX. The TNM classification system may also be dictated with modifiers, such as T1a pN1bii M3. Do not use commas to separate TNM staging.

Cervical Cytology

CIN-1, CIN-2, CIN-3 or CIN grade 1, etc.

SURGICAL TERMINOLOGY

Suture Sizes

The USP system sizes sutures ranging from 11-0 (smallest) through 7 (largest). Therefore, a size 1 suture is different from and larger than a size 1-0.

Examples:

- D: one oh chromic suture
- T: 1-0 chromic suture
- D: aught Vicryl or zero Vicryl or oh Vicryl
- T: 0 Vicryl

Brown-Sharp gauge stainless steel sutures range from 40 (smallest) through 20 (largest).

Suture sizes are transcribed with arabic numerals. Transcribe the number symbol (#) only if dictated. Do not express as all zeros, e.g., 00, 000, 0000.

Example:

- D: three oh Vicryl
- T: 3-0 Vicryl

Kirschner Wires (K-wires)

K-wires are available in diameters from 0.028 to 0.062 inches (0.7 to 1.6 mm).

Example:

- D: A thirty-two K-wire was used.
- T: A 0.032 K-wire was used.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Unless otherwise directed in the account instructions/client profile, transcribe references to patient information as follows:

PATIENT'S NAME IN TEXT

No patient names in the text. Transcribe “the patient” or grammatically correct variation instead (e.g., The patient was seen... *or* Patient seen on... *or* The patient’s last visit was... *or* Patient's mother states).

Note: If dictator states “The patient was identified as Mary Jones” or similar, transcribe as “The patient was identified as the correct patient.”

PATIENT'S FAMILY MEMBERS' NAMES IN TEXT

No family members’ names in text. Transcribe the grammatically correct version of the statement instead.

Examples:

D: The patient was accompanied by his mother, Debbie.

T: The patient was accompanied by his mother.

D: Patient lives with Jenny, who is her daughter.

T: Patient lives with her daughter.

OTHER PATIENT IDENTIFIERS IN TEXT

Transcribe other patient (and family member) identifiers such as SSN, medical device serial numbers, addresses, telephone numbers, etc., as dictated.

CONJUNCTIONS

A conjunction is a word or phrase that connects words, other phrases, or clauses.

Coordinating conjunctions: Connect words, phrases or clauses of equal rank: *and, but, or, and nor*. Usually are preceded by a comma.

Example:

The patient was very ill, but she was not admitted.

Correlative conjunctions: Consist of two elements which must be used in pairs: *both ... and, not only ... but (also), either ...or, neither...nor*. When using *either...or* and *neither...nor*, make the verb agree with the subject nearest the verb.

Examples:

Either Ms. Smith or her **assistants have** copies of the old presentation.

Either her assistants or **Ms. Smith has** copies of the old presentation.

If subjects before and after *or* and *nor* are both singular, use a singular verb; if both are plural, use a plural verb.

Examples:

Neither the **brother** nor the **sister has** the illness.

Neither the **brothers** nor the **sisters have** the illness.

Subordinating conjunctions: Use to join unequal parts (dependent clauses to main or independent clauses): *while, when, where, after, before, if, since, yet, so, although*. Usually are preceded by a comma.

Example:

The patient was very pale, yet he refused treatment.

Conjunctive adverbs: Use to connect two independent clauses: *consequently, finally, furthermore, however, moreover, nevertheless, similarly, subsequently, then, therefore, thus*. Usually are preceded by a semicolon (sometimes a period) and usually followed by a comma.

Example:

The day was dark and dreary; however, the day was very warm.

CONTRACTIONS

Contractions are not used in medical reports except in direct quotes.

Example:

The patient stated, "I'm more tired than ever. I don't seem to be adjusting well to this new medication."

Common contractions:

I'd: I would or I had

he's/she's: he/she is or he/she has

don't: do not

can't: cannot

it's: it is or it has (Do not confuse the possessive form of the personal pronoun (its) with the contraction it's (it is). There will never be an its').

CREDENTIALS AND TITLES

Refer to the account physician list to determine appropriate format for credentials (e.g., MD vs M.D., DO vs D.O., PA-C vs P.A.C., etc.) and maintain consistency throughout the document.

Note: If unable to determine the appropriate format (i.e., physician list has differing formats), transcribe the abbreviated format without periods (e.g., MD, DO, PA-C, etc.).

COURTESY TITLE

When a courtesy title for an academic degree (e.g., Dr.) precedes a name, do not use the degree abbreviation after the name. Use one form or the other.

Example:

Dr. John Wilson *or* John Wilson, MD *not* Dr. John Wilson, MD

DATES

In the body of document, transcribe dates as dictated.

Follow the account instructions/client profile for date formats; however, if not specifically defined use the rules of formatting as noted below. For example, if a 4-digit year is dictated, transcribe 4 digits (2005) as dictated. If a 2-digit year is dictated, transcribe 2 digits (05) as dictated.

- Ordinals cannot be used in month, day, year format.

Example:

D: September 30th 2005.

T: September 30, 2005.

- Use ordinals when the day is dictated prior to the month, and the date is preceded by the word "the": the 5th of May 2006.
- Ordinals may be used when month day only are dictated: May 17th *or* May 17 *or* 5/17
- Use a comma to separate the year when the day of the month is dictated: December 21, 2009.
- Do not use a comma if the day is not dictated: May 2010 *or* 05/2010
- Use a comma after the year when the sentence continues after a date: I saw the patient on May 17, 2010, at the clinic.
- Use virgules for short form: 09/02/2008
- Military Style: 2 September 2008

DIAGNOSIS/DIAGNOSES

REPORT HEADINGS

Transcribe the singular or plural form as appropriate.

“THE SAME”

Do not transcribe “the same” or “same as above” or “same as on admission” when an author dictates it as the discharge diagnosis or the postoperative diagnosis. Complete the diagnosis in full.

Examples:

D: Admission diagnosis bilateral inguinal hernia. Discharge diagnosis the same.

T: Admission Diagnosis: Bilateral inguinal hernia.
Discharge Diagnosis: Bilateral inguinal hernia.

D: Preoperative diagnosis acute appendicitis. Postoperative diagnosis the same.

T: Preoperative Diagnosis: Acute appendicitis.
Postoperative Diagnosis: Acute appendicitis.

DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS

The term differential diagnosis is always singular and always takes a singular verb.

Example:

The differential diagnosis is acute viral gastroenteritis versus food poisoning versus acute abdomen.

EDITING PROTOCOL

BLANKS/QA MARKERS

Utilize all research tools available to provide the best quality document before inserting a blank.

Note: Use the platform-specific format/keystrokes to create blanks/QA markers.

EDITS

Best Practice

Note: This is the *preferred* option for all customers and *will not* be noted in the account instructions/client profile.

Transcribe as dictated. Minor edits are permitted to correct grammar, punctuation, format (e.g., add [headings/subheadings](#) as needed), abbreviations, etc. Clipped sentences are acceptable. Do not make edits that compromise the dictator’s style. Refer to account instructions/client profile for any exceptions.

Examples:

D: The patient is 28 yo male period

T: The patient is a 28-year-old male.

D: On physical exam, patient is alert and oriented times three.

T: Physical Exam: Patient is alert and oriented x3.

Edit when a grammatical change would make the statement more correct (singular vs. plural verb agreement (see [verb tense](#)), correction for obvious pronoun error, etc.).

Edit to correct for an *obvious* nonclinical error that will *not* impact patient care.

Examples:

The patient drinks (vs. smokes) 1 pack of cigarettes per day.

He (vs. she) is pregnant with her second child.

Flag dictated medical decision making errors (those that have the potential to impact patient care) in accordance with account instructions/client profile. We must not make clinical decisions for authors even if we *think* we know what they meant to say.

Qualified Verbatim

Note: Qualified verbatim may be at the account level or dictator level. If this applies, it will be noted in the account instructions/client profile. This information is provided here for the purpose of definition, in the event it is noted on an account.

Transcribe exactly as dictated, word for word, including, grammar, abbreviations, headings, format, etc. Convert dictated punctuation to the appropriate format (e.g., new line = paragraph; period = . ; comma = ,). Exclude transcribing background/side conversations, directions from the dictator, umms, ahhs, and other non-speech sounds.

Example:

D: The patient is 28 yo male period

T: The patient is 28 YO male.

Flag dictated medical decision making errors (those that have the potential to impact patient care) in accordance with account instructions/client profile. We must not make clinical decisions for authors even if we *think* we know what they meant to say.

SPEECH RECOGNITION AND EDITING

Speech recognition engine does not always understand the appropriate context for sound alike words and may choose the incorrect term. It is up to the user to identify these terms and correct to match the context of the dictation whether it is inserted by the speech engine or transcribed by a person. See [Appendix D](#) for a list of common sound alike terms.

EPONYMS AND PROPER NOUNS

POSSESSIVES

Transcribe eponyms without the possessive form.

Examples: Down syndrome, Raynaud disease.

Exception: When an eponym is not followed by a noun (e.g., *disease* following *Raynaud*), use the possessive form, e.g., Past medical history is significant for Alzheimer's. For her Crohn's, the patient will be treated with Pentasa.

ADJECTIVES

The adjective forms of eponyms are never capitalized.

Examples: parkinsonian or pickwickian.

PLURALS

Do not use an apostrophe.

Examples: Kellys were used during the operation. The Smiths were invited to participate.

FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Transcribe familial relationship terms such as "mom" and "dad" as dictated. Do not change to the formal mother and father. Capitalize family titles (mother, father, mom, dad, etc.) when they stand alone or are followed by a personal name.

Examples:

I counseled Mom to use a 50:50 mixture of alcohol and vinegar to clean the ears.

He came to the office today with Uncle Harry.

At discharge, Dad was instructed to keep the patient's wound clean and dry.

HINT: If you can replace the "mother/mom" or "father/dad" with the person's formal name, "Mother/Mom" or "Father/Dad" should be capitalized. If you cannot replace the "mother/mom" or "father/dad" with the person's formal name, then "mother/mom" or "father/dad" should not be capitalized.

Do not capitalize family titles when a possessive or an article precedes them.

Examples:

I spoke to his mom and dad about the need to strictly adhere to this medication regimen.
The patient's sister accompanied her on this office visit.

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GENUS AND SPECIES

Genus names and their short forms are capitalized when followed by a species name, e.g., *Staphylococcus aureus* or *Staph aureus*.

No period after short form of genus names, e.g., *C difficile*.

Genus names need not be capitalized if not accompanied by a species name, e.g., a staph infection or group B strep.

Adjective forms of genus names are never capitalized, e.g., staphylococcal infection.

GRAMMAR

USAGE

Verbs: Words that name an action or describe a state of being.

Action Verbs: These verbs tell what the subject does.

Adverbs: Words that describe verbs, adjectives or other adverbs. Adverbs answer the questions: When? Where? How? To what extent?

Nouns: A word that names a person, place or thing.

Collective Nouns: Names of groups of people or things that take a singular verb.

Common Nouns: Names any one of a class of person, place or thing.

Proper Nouns: Names a specific person, place or thing.

Adjectives: Words that modify nouns.

Grammar Usage Examples:

Patient was seen in followup (noun).

Follow up with me in 2 weeks (verb).

Followup appointment in 3 weeks (adjective).

VERBS

Auxiliary Verbs

Forms of the verbs be, do, and have should not be transcribed following a [heading](#) or a subheading.

Example:

D: Abdomen is soft; heart has regular rate and rhythm.

T: Abdomen: Soft. Heart: Regular rate and rhythm.

D: Lungs are clear.

T: Lungs: Clear

Verb Tense

Maintain the same tense (e.g., is/was, are/were) when transcribing a physical examination paragraph or an operative report, unless an account or dictator requires [qualified verbatim](#) transcription.

HEADINGS/SUBHEADINGS

Insert headings/subheadings as dictated and maintain the order dictated. Add headings/subheadings as needed to maintain consistency. Use the platform-specific format/keystrokes to create headings/subheadings.

Do not transcribe text that repeats the heading/subheading.

Example:

D: The abdomen is soft, nontender.

T: Abdomen: Soft, nontender.

LISTS

Use list format only if indicated by dictator (i.e., dictates numbers or states "next" or "new line").

Do not number just one item, even if dictated.
Use the platform-specific format/keystrokes to create lists.

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LABORATORY DATA

Do not use a comma to separate a lab value from the name of the lab test.

Example: Hemoglobin 14.6.

Separate related lab data by commas, unrelated data by semicolons or periods.

Example: Hemoglobin 14.6, hematocrit 38, platelets 286,000. BUN 12, creatinine 1.3; glucose 112.

Do not expand [metric/SI](#) units of measure if accompanied by a numeral.

Example:

D: Creatinine measured 0.7 milligrams percent

T: Creatinine measured 0.7 mg%.

Transcribe lab values as dictated.

Example:

D: platelets two sixteen

T: platelets 216, not 216,000

Note: If “two hundred sixteen thousand” is dictated, transcribe as 216,000.

Urine specific gravity is always transcribed as a single numeral followed by a period and three additional numerals.

Example:

D: specific gravity ten ten

T: specific gravity 1.010

Use numerals to express lab values. Insert a leading zero and a decimal in metric measurements of less than one (e.g., 0.6).

Do not drop a *dictated* zero, which may be used to indicate a very specific value: If three point zero is dictated, transcribe as 3.0. Alternately, if a whole number only is dictated as a lab value (e.g., creatinine of 1), do not add a decimal point and zero.

Thousand/million measurements:

Examples:

D: White blood count four point eight thousand.

T: White blood count 4.8 thousand *or* white blood count 4800.

D: Platelets one point five million.

T: Platelets 1.5 million *or* 1,500,000.

The term pH should always appear as lowercase p, capital H unless it falls at the beginning of a sentence. In that instance, transcribe as PH.

POSITIVE/NEGATIVE REFERENCES

Spell out positive/negative references.

Examples:

A positive *not* A+

Rh negative *not* Rh-

gram negative *not* gram-

NUMBERS

FRACTIONS

Use a numeral for a fraction that precedes a noun when it is combined with a unit of measure. Spell out and hyphenate fractions when they are used as adjectives. Use numerals to express mixed fractions. Do not replace dictated fractions with decimals except when dictated as a percentage. Use mixed fractions to express [standard \(nonmetric\)](#) measurements.

Examples:

1/4-pound mass, 1/2-inch wound
One-half normal saline was used.
1-1/2 years (use hyphen to separate a mixed fraction)
Pregnancy at 35-3/7 weeks (*not* 35-3/7th weeks)
1/4 inch (*not* 0.25 inch)
1-1/2 inches, 3-1/2 yards, 5-1/2-inch wound

Use decimals not fractions with percentages

Example:

D: one-quarter percent lidocaine
T: 0.25% lidocaine

Do not hyphenate fractions written out and used as [nouns](#).

Examples:

One third of the calf was gangrenous.
The dosage was decreased by one half.

NUMBER FORMATTING

Adjacent Numbers

When two numbers are adjacent, the unit of measure is a numeral and the amount is spelled out.

Examples:

Darvocet-N 50 one to two q.4-6 h. p.r.n. pain, *but* Percocet 2 tablets 3 times a day (numbers are not adjacent).
Novolin 70/30 eight units.
The patient was given gentamicin x3. Thirty milliliters of fluid drained from the wound on operative day 2.

Axis Diagnoses

Use roman numerals for Axis diagnoses.

Beginning of Sentence

If a dictated sentence begins with a numeral, it is acceptable to transcribe as a numeral, transcribe as a word, or recast the sentence. Do not add an article (a, an, the) that may make the sentence incorrect or awkward.

Examples:

D: 20 prescribed.
Acceptable: Twenty prescribed.
Acceptable: 20 prescribed.

D: 3-0 Vicryl sutures were used to close the skin.
Acceptable: Sutures of 3-0 Vicryl were used to close the skin.
Acceptable: 3-0 Vicryl sutures were used to close the skin.

D: One liter of crystalloid was given.
Acceptable: 1 L of crystalloid was given.
Acceptable: One liter of crystalloid was given.

Acceptable: Crystalloid 1 L was given.

When the numeral is a [metric/SI](#) unit of measure and the numeral is spelled out, the unit of measure must also be spelled out.

Example:

D: 1 mg of Coumadin was given.

T: One milligram of Coumadin was given.

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Blood Pressure

See [blood pressure ranges](#).

Cranial Nerves

Use arabic numerals for [cranial nerves](#).

Decimals

Use decimals to express [metric/SI](#) measurements.

Example: 1.5 cm

Exponents

Use these formats to transcribe dictated exponents:

Examples:

D: The burn area was 4 centimeters squared.

T: The burn area was 4 sq cm.

D: The specimen was calculated at 8 cubic millimeters.

T: The specimen was calculated at 8 cu mm.

D: Adriamycin dose was 500 milligrams per meter squared.

T: Adriamycin dose was 500 mg/sq m.

D: ... eight to the third power.

T: ... 8 to the third power.

Numbers in a Series

She packed 2 hats, 3 dresses, and 5 pairs of shoes.

Numbers with Symbols

Use a numeral when a number is followed by a symbol.

Example: 5%, not five %

Numerals 1-9

Numerals are preferred and are the required format for lab values, vital signs, drug dosages, measurements, ages, or any other hard data. **Exception:** Transcribe as words when used as [nouns](#).

Numeral Formatting – Additional Examples

Dictated as:	Format numerals as:
four to five	4-5
1 to 100,000 (ratio)	1:100,000
Twenty-twenty vision	20/20
BP 120 over 80	120/80
grade two over six	2/6
three point five centimeters	3.5 cm
point five centimeters	0.5 cm
ten to twenty percent	10% to 20% (<i>not</i> 10-20%)
four centimeters squared	4 sq cm
five hundred milligrams per meter squared	500 mg/sq m
two four by fours	two 4 x 4's

Ordinals

Use ordinals (1st, 2nd, 3rd) to indicate position in a series.

Examples:

The patient is in the 10th grade at school.

CAT scan showed a lesion on the 8th rib.

The left index finger was amputated at the 2nd phalanx.

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Plural Numbers

To express plural when using single-digit numbers, add an apostrophe s ('s), e.g., 1's, 5's, etc. To express plural when using multiple-digit numbers, add an s without an apostrophe, e.g., 10s, 20s, 300s, etc.

NUMBERS AS NOUNS

Spell out numbers when used as nouns. Spell zero as a word when it stands alone in a general expression. Use the numeral as part of a classification or as a measurement.

Examples:

Do not proceed without one or the other.

She will go with the two of them.

The patient's chances of recovery are zero.

At the completion of PT, the patient's pain level was 0/5.

This 20-year-old female is gravida 0.

OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE/OBSCENITIES

See [Risk Management Issues](#).

POSSESSION

Nouns not ending in an "s" show possession by adding 's: daughter's clothes, caretaker's duties

Nouns ending in "s" where only the final syllable ends in a sibilant (s sound) show possession by adding 's: fungus's toxicity, virus's origin.

Nouns ending in "s" when each of the final 2 syllables end in a sibilant (s, x, z) show possession by adding an apostrophe only: Jesus' disciples, physicians' dictations, Los Angeles' freeways.

Hyphenated compound terms: Use 's after the final word in hyphenated compound terms: daughter-in-law's brother, son-in-law's mother.

Individual possession: When possession is not shared, show possession after each name: Dr. Smith's and Dr. Freeman's opinions differed.

Joint possession: When possession is shared by two or more individuals, show possession after final name only: Doctors Smith and Freeman's diagnosis was congestive heart failure.

Possessive pronouns (e.g., hers, its, ours): Do not follow with an apostrophe.

Units of time, measurement, or money use either 's or s' depending upon usage:

- With the number 1, use 's: 1 week's time, 1 dollar's worth.
- For numbers greater than 1, use s' : 22 weeks' gestation, 40 degrees' flexion.

PROPRIETARY/BRAND/TRADE NAMES

With registered and trademarked names, capitalize the initial letter only, e.g., Cypher stent not CYPHER, Mobic 7.5 mg not MOBIC, Zithromax Z-Pak not Z-PAK.

Products with mixed case lettering can be transcribed either with an initial capital letter or as the manufacturer's name is shown on the product. Always use an initial capital letter format for products with mixed case names at the beginning of a sentence.

Examples:

pHisoderm or Phisoderm

HydroDIURIL or Hydrodiuril

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PUNCTUATION

APOSTROPHE

See [possession](#), [plural numbers](#), [eponyms and proper nouns](#), and [plural acronyms and plural abbreviations](#), [cardiology tracing \(prime\)](#), sections in this document for specific information.

COLON

A colon is used to call attention to the information that follows. Colons and [semicolons](#) are not interchangeable.

Introduces a list or series.

Example:

The patient had the following complaints: not sleeping enough, eating too much, and not getting enough exercise.

Separates two independent clauses when the second clarifies the first.

Example:

In the ER we have an important saying: If you did not write it in the chart, it never happened.

Separates numerals in [ratios](#).

Examples:

2:1 mixture, epinephrine 1:100,000.

Follows the salutation in a business letter

Example:

Dear Dr. Hughes:

COMMA

A comma is used in the following instances:

To separate items in a series.

Examples:

He opened the letter, read it, and made a note of its contents.

He is to take Lasix 40 mg b.i.d., Colace 100 mg daily, and Lipitor 1 daily.

Note: Do not omit the final comma that separates the last two elements when its absence changes the meaning. Do not use commas to separate a drug name from the dosage.

When the month, day, and year are dictated in that order, set off the year by a comma.

Example:

The patient was admitted on Tuesday, April 15, 2005.

To clarify a preceding phrase.

Example:

Dr. I. Feel Good, Chief of Medicine.

To set off a parenthetical expression/interruptive.

Examples:

The patient had a ruptured appendix, not an ovarian cyst, which we removed in the operating room.

The left lower quadrant, however, is benign.

To separate a compound sentence.

Example:

The patient's condition was critical, but we felt we could save him.

DASHES

Do not use dashes. Alternative punctuation is readily available, i.e., [colon](#), [comma](#), [semicolon](#).

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HYPHENS

When two or more words are combined to form a compound adjective preceding a noun, a hyphen is usually required.

Example:

The patient is a well-developed, well-nourished male.

No hyphen is used if the adjective follows a verb.

Example:

The patient was well developed and well nourished.

Use suspensive hyphens when there is a series of compound modifiers and they are separated from each other

Example:

She has a 3- to 4-year history of substance abuse.

Use hyphens in these instances:

For clarification: (re-cover, re-create)

With compound words formed with the prefix *self-* (self-care)

With proper nouns and numbers (non-Hodgkin lymphoma, pre-2002 history)

To join an adjective to a participle, whether the compound precedes or follows the noun (good-natured, soft-spoken)

Additional examples of correct use of hyphens: month-to-date, figure-of-eight suture, excision of L5-S1 disk, ST-T wave abnormality.

Do not use hyphens in these instances:

Between a number and a [metric/SI](#) unit of measure preceding a noun (4 cm wound)

Designations of persons by race or ethnicity (African American, Asian American, French Canadian, Native American, etc.)

Prefixes (when to use/not use a hyphen)

After most prefixes, do not use a hyphen to combine with the rest of the word.

Examples: micro-, non-, mid-, over-, pan-, pre-, post-, extra-. Refer to appropriate references, e.g., those listed at the end of this document, for specific spellings.

Exception: non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus

Some words require a hyphen after a prefix because the absence of a hyphen would result in a word with a different meaning.

Example: re-sort (to sort again), resort (alternative course of action)

Some prefixes are not combined with the next word and do not require a hyphen; utilize appropriate references.

Example: The mid to distal 1/3 showed osteopenia.

SEMICOLON

A semicolon indicates a pause in text, stronger than a comma but not a complete stop, as indicated by a period.

Use a semicolon to separate two independent clauses when a conjunction (and, but, or) is not used.

Example: Three ears are one too many; one ear is one too few.

Use a semicolon to separate items in a series in which one or more of the items contain internal commas.

Example: His medical history includes an MI, for which he received TPN; renal insufficiency; gout; and hypercholesterolemia.

Use a semicolon before a transitional expression when it joins two independent clauses.

Examples:

She had planned to have liposuction; however, the plastic surgeon felt a tummy tuck would be better.

Cloning animals is not a good idea; moreover, cloning spouses, teachers, or politicians is not either.

Note: Unlike commas and periods, semicolons and colons are used outside quotation marks.

SPACING

Period Two spaces follow a period at the end of a sentence.

Colon Two spaces follow a colon.

Comma Single space follows a comma.

Semicolon Single space follows a semicolon.

Question mark Two spaces follow a question mark.

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VIRGULE

Do not use a virgule with medication dosages except when there are no numerals on either side of the virgule, such as mL/tsp, mg/kg.

Note: Transcribe the virgule when it is part of the drug name, e.g., Sinemet 10/100 or Advair 50/500.

Do not use more than one virgule per expression (i.e., 5 mL/tsp per day, not 5 mL/tsp/day).

Exception: More than one virgule may be used in describing cancer therapy protocols, e.g., Adriamycin 20 mg/sq m/day IV on days 1, 15 and 29.

Cardiac murmurs: See [heart murmurs](#) (Cardiology) section.

Fractions: See [fractions](#) (Numbers) section.

Blood pressure values: See [blood pressure](#) (Ranges) section.

RANGES

Under most circumstances, use the word “to” to indicate a range. Do not use a colon.

Example:

There was a 30% to 45% chance of recurrence.

Exception: A hyphen may be used when all of the following conditions are met:

Neither value is a negative number (less than zero).

Neither value includes a symbol (percent sign, virgule, etc.).

Neither value contains a decimal, fraction, or colon.

Neither value contains more than 3 digits.

The phrases “from...to,” “between...and,” or “from...through” are not used.

Examples:

UA showed 10-12 WBCs per high power field.

Followup appointment in 3-4 weeks *or* followup appointment in 3 to 4 weeks.

BLOOD PRESSURE RANGES

In a range of blood pressure readings, do not use a virgule in place of the word “over.” Type out, as in 110-120 over 70-80 *or* 110 to 120 over 70 to 80.

In a blood pressure reading where only one of the values is a range, transcribe the range with a hyphen or the word “to” and do not use the virgule, as in 160 to 170 over 80 *or* 160-170 over 80.

Dictated “one-teens” should not be transcribed as 110s. The definition of a range in the 110s is from 110.0 to 110.9.

Example:

Blood pressure ranged in the **one-teens** to 120s over 70s to 80s.

CARDIAC MURMUR RANGES

See [heart murmurs](#) (Cardiology) section.

CRANIAL NERVE RANGES

Cranial nerves 2-12 were intact *or* cranial nerves 2 through 12 were intact.

TESTING RANGES

Pain scale 1 to 2 out of 10 *or* 1/10 to 2/10.

Reflexes 3+/4 *or* Reflexes 3+ over 4.

Exception: When there is a minus sign that may be confused with a hyphen, transcribe the range using the words *out of* or *over*.

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RATIOS

Use a colon to separate numeric values. Do not use a virgule (slash).

Example:

D: one to one hundred thousand

T: 1:100,000

Use a virgule, a hyphen, or the word “to” in expressions that do not contain a numeric value.

Examples:

male/female ratio

BUN to creatinine ratio

FEV-FVC ratio

RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Any report containing dictated information that carries a potential risk to the patient, the author, or the healthcare facility requires special handling.

Leave a blank/QA marker to replace any dictation that is deemed inappropriate or offensive. This includes obscenities, racist remarks, profanity, derogatory language, etc. Any instance of a report which is delivered with a blank/QA marker for this reason must be reported to the Customer Care Manager for the account, and subsequently to the facility.

Exception: Direct patient quotations that contain offensive language are to be transcribed verbatim, enclosed in quotation marks. All such reports are to be reported to the Customer Care Manager, and subsequently to the facility.

Check account instructions/client profile for the ability to place such a report on hold or for rerouting to allow client handling before the report is made available for viewing in either paper or electronic form.

Note: A blank can be filled in; however, an inappropriate remark, once transcribed, may exist forever. This is particularly true in the case of electronic health records, which may not allow any changes once a document uploads.

SCALES, SCORES AND GRADES

Scales use arabic numerals. Most, but not all, scoring and grade systems use arabic numerals. Check appropriate references to ensure the correct numbering system is used.

Examples:

Glasgow coma scale 5.

The Apgar scores were 6 and 9 at one and five minutes.

The patient had a LeFort II fracture.

PAIN SCALE/MOTOR STRENGTH

When “pain scale 7 out of 10” is dictated, both 7/10 and 7 out of 10 are acceptable. The same holds true for motor strength assessments and other similar dictation.

Exception: When there is a minus sign that could be confused with a hyphen, transcribe the scale using the words *out of* or *over*: Muscle strength 4- over 5.

CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE (CKD)

Use arabic numerals: CKD grades 1 through 4

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SPECIAL CHARACTERS/SYMBOLS

NUMBER (# or No.)

When the word “number” is dictated with regard to serial numbers, model numbers, or surgical instruments, either the symbol # or the abbreviation No. may be used.

Examples:

Using a No. 15 blade, a midline incision was made from the xiphoid to the symphysis pubis.

The right atrial lead was a St. Jude model #1688TC-5, serial #DN14524.

A #75 Beaver blade was used to make a stab wound into clear cornea.

Exception: The number symbol (#) is not used when the word “number” is part of the medication name: Tylenol No. 3. The number symbol may be used to indicate a quantity of medication.

Example:

D: Tylenol number three one to two q four to six hours prn number sixty.

Acceptable: Tylenol No. 3 one to two q.4-6 h. p.r.n. #60.

Acceptable: Tylenol No. 3 one to two q.4-6 hours p.r.n. #60.

PERCENT SYMBOL

Use the percent symbol (%) immediately following a numeral, with no space between the numeral and the symbol. Spell out the word “percent” when no numeral immediately precedes the term. Always use the word “to” in a range of percentages, never a hyphen, e.g., 50% to 75%.

PROHIBITED SPECIAL CHARACTERS/SYMBOLS

Transcription system limitations prohibit the use of these special characters:

& (ampersand)

@ (at sign)

\ (backward slash)

~ (tilde)

^ (carat)

| (pipe)

degree sign

subscript

superscript

STAGE

For cancer staging, see [Oncology](#). For all other staging, consult appropriate references to determine whether roman or arabic numerals should be used.

STANDARD (NONMETRIC) MEASUREMENTS

Spell out all standard (nonmetric) measurements: feet, inches, yards, pounds, ounces, grains, etc.

Exception: If an author dictates “F” instead of Fahrenheit, the abbreviation can be used.

Height: Express height in feet and inches. Do not use the symbols (‘ and “). The expression “foot” is incorrect with any height or length over 1 foot. **Exception:** When used as a compound modifier (adjective) preceding a noun, use the singular form and hyphenate.

Examples:

D: The patient is five foot two inches.

T: The patient is 5 feet 2 inches.

Similarly, a weight would be transcribed as 5 *pounds* 6 ounces, not 5 *pound* 6 ounces.

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Use a [hyphen](#) between the numeral and the measurement in expressions used as adjectives, except for [metric/SI](#) units of measure.

Examples:

There was a 3-inch laceration.

The patient had a 5-pound weight loss.

This 5-foot, 140-pound female presented to the office.

Digital Numbering: Transcribe digital numbering for height and weight as dictated.

Example:

The patient’s weight is 67.5 pounds.

TIME/CLOCK REFERENCES

Format as a.m. and p.m.

When transcribing standard time on the hour, do not use :00, e.g., 4 p.m. not 4:00 p.m.

The word *o’clock* is dropped when reference is made to minutes past the hour, i.e., 4:30 not 4:30 *o’clock*.

Military time is transcribed as 4 digits based on 24 hourly divisions. Add zeroes before or after numerals, as needed: 0130, 0600, 1500, 2330. No colon is used, nor is the word *o’clock*. Transcribe *hours*, if dictated (e.g., 1500 hours).

Exception: When seconds are dictated with military time, the colon is used (e.g., 21:15:30).

Anatomic Positions: When anatomic locations are described using clock orientation, transcribe *o’clock* only with numerals dictated on the hour. For minutes past the hour, drop the word *o’clock*.

Examples:

The cervix was injected at the 3, 6, 9, and 12 *o’clock* positions.

A scleral incision was made at the 1:30 position.

TIMES (AS IN “TIMES TWO”)

“Times two” or “times three”: Substitute an x for the word “times” only when it is followed by a numeral. Express as x3, lowercase x, no space between the x and the numeral. Dictated “times two” may be transcribed as either x2 or as times 2. If the word “times” is dictated, do not edit or substitute the word “for” for the word “times”; transcribe as dictated.

Example:

D: Troponin I was negative times two.

Acceptable: Troponin I was negative x2.

Acceptable: Troponin I was negative times 2.
Acceptable: Troponin I was negative times two.

VERTEBRAE

Express without a hyphen for a single vertebra, e.g., C6, L5.

Repeat the letter before each vertebra in a list, e.g., L3, L4, and L5 *not* L3, 4, and 5.

Use a hyphen to indicate a disk space.

Example:

There was a degenerative disk at C5-6 and at L5-S1.

Note: Transcribe disk spaces as dictated. It is not necessary to repeat the same letter before the second vertebra, but it may be transcribed if dictated.

When expressing a range between vertebrae that are not adjacent and the author is not referring to an intervertebral space, spell out the word “to” or “through”; do not hyphenate.

Examples:

The patient had a fusion of C5 through C7.

We plan to do a fusion of T9 to T11.

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YEARS

Use numerals to express specific years: 2005

DECADES

Plural: Add **s** (without the apostrophe) to form the numeric plural: He was well until the 1990s.

Shortened: Use a preceding apostrophe in numeric expressions of decades of the century ('90s), but do not use an apostrophe in expressions related to age (80s).

Examples:

I grew up in the '60s.

She is in her 40s.

Special References: Spell out and capitalize special references to the decades.

Examples:

the Psychedelic Sixties

the Gay Nineties

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REFERENCES CONSULTED

Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary, by W. B. Saunders
Medical Transcription Guide - Do's and Don'ts, by Marcy Otis Diehl
Pharmaceutical Word Book, by Ellen Drake, CMT, and Randy Drake, MS
Rules for Writers, by Diana Hacker
Stedman's Abbreviations, Acronyms, & Symbols, by Lippincott, Williams, and Wilkins
Stedman's Medical Dictionary, by Lippincott, Williams, and Wilkins
The AAMT Book of Style for Medical Transcription, Second Edition, by AAMT
The Book of Style for Medical Transcription, by AHDI (aka BOS 3rd edition)
The Complete Idiot's Guide to Grammar and Style, by Laurie E. Rozakis, PhD
The Elements of Style, by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White
The Gregg Reference Manual, by William Sabin
The Joint Commission
The Institute for Safe Medication Practices
Vera Pyle's Current Medical Terminology, by Health Professions Institute

APPENDIX A: Unacceptable Terms

The Unacceptable Terms list should be used for accounts/dictators that have not been identified as strictly verbatim. Unacceptable terms are noted in red font. Depending on the context of the dictation, use the information provided in the *Explanation* column to determine how to appropriately express the unacceptable term.

Disclaimer: The Unacceptable Terms list is not meant to be all-inclusive; it is the responsibility of the user to research correct usage of abbreviations and terminology.

Term	Explanation
A and E	accident and emergency
AC-DC, ac/dc	bisexual
admin	administer, administration
adnexum	adnexa
AL, A-line, art. Line	arterial line
alright	nonstandard spelling of <i>all right</i>
amnio	amniocentesis
AP	appendectomy
APC	all-purpose capsule
appy	appendectomy
ART	arterial (line)
art line	arterial line
B and O	belladonna and opium
B and W	black and white (milk of magnesia and cascara extract)
baso stip	basophilic stippling
batt	battery
BB	blow bottle, blue bloater (emphysema)
bd	band
BEEP	both end-expiratory pressures
biochem	biochemical, biochemistry
BK amp	below-knee amputation
bl	bland
BO	body odor
Bod units	Bodansky units
brit	british
BS=BL	breath sounds equal bilaterally
BVDs	underwear
C diff	C difficile

CB	code blue
chole	cholecystectomy
cig	cigarettes
circ and sen	circulation and sensation
contrx	contractions
CTXN	contraction
CV	curriculum vitae
D and A	dilatation and aspiration
DC	dilatation and curettage, discharge, discontinue
DC'd	discharged, discontinued
DDX, DDx	differential diagnosis
DECUB, decub	ulcer, position
depo	brief form of a drug name that begins with these four letters, e.g., Depo-Provera, Depo-Testadiol, Depo-Testosterone, DepoGen, Depo-Medrol, Depopred, etc.
Dex, D-stix	Dextrostix
DG, Dg	diagnosis
diag	diagnosis
DIE	died in emergency room
diff diag	differential diagnosis
doxy	doxycycline
D-stix	Dextrostix
Dx, dx	diagnosis

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Term (cont)	Explanation
E	methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDMA, Ecstasy)
eosin	eosin-methylene blue
EPTFE, E-PTFE, e-PTFE	expanded polytetrafluoroethylene
ex lap	exploratory laparotomy
fam doc	family doctor
fam hist	family history
FD	family doctor
FHx	family history
FLK	funny-looking kid (see Risk Management Issue)
FLR	funny-looking rash
fluctuants	fluctuance
FTN	finger-to-nose (coordination, test)
FUO	fever of unknown origin
GB	goofball (barbiturate pill)
GIGO	garbage in, garbage out
govt	government
GRAS	generally recognized as safe
H flu	H influenzae
HBGA	had it before, got it again
hep	hepatitis
het	heterophil (antibody)
ho	heroin
horse	heroin
HPA	hypothalamic-pituitary axis
HPD	highly probably drunk
hypo	hypodermic
I or I	illness or injuries
ICSHI	intracytoplasmic sperm head injection
ICSI	intracytoplasmic sperm injection
IND	investigational new drug
JND	just noticeable difference
Jx	junction
KO'd	knocked out
lam and fus	laminectomy and fusion
lami	laminotomy

lap	laparoscopy, laparotomy
lap appy, lap-appy	laparoscopic appendectomy
lap chole	laparoscopic cholecystectomy
lap Nissen	laparoscopic Nissen fundoplication
lat	latissimus
lat Rin	lactated Ringer
lat, lats	latissimus dorsi
LATCH	literature attached to charts
leuk esterase	leukocyte esterase
m3	cubic meter (see exponents)
mag cit	magnesium citrate
mammo	mammogram, mammography
meth	methamphetamine, methedrine, methyl
mets	metastases
metz	Metzenbaum (scissors)
MgSO4	magnesium sulfate
MJ	marijuana
MS, ms	morphine sulfate
MSO4	morphine sulfate
MT	empty
N	negative
narc	narcotic, narcotics officer
narco	narcotics

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Term (cont)	Explanation
NEM	no evidence of malignancy
neuroforamen, neuroforamina	neural foramen, neural foramina
Nitropaste, nitropaste	nitroglycerin paste or nitro paste (not to be transcribed as a single word)
NV	nausea and vomiting
orthopaedic	orthopedic
palp	palpate, palpable, palpation, palpitation
pct	percent
PDQ	pretty darn quick (slang)
pen VK	Penicillin VK (Pen-Vee K was discontinued in 2002)
Perm-A-Cath, permacath	mispronunciation of PermCath, Permcath
PEX	physical examination
PG	pregnant
PHx	past history
PIIS	posterior inferior iliac spine
Pleurovac	misspelling of Pleur-evac
PM	post mortem (after death; PM is slang for this term)
PMHx	past medical history
PN	penicillin
po, P-O	postop
POp, POP	postop
PP	pink puffer (sign of emphysema)
PR	Panama red (variety of marijuana)
primip	primigravida
primip, PRIMIP, PRLA	primipara
protime	prothrombin time or pro time
psyche	psychiatric, psychiatry, psychologic, psychology
q.h.	every hour
qt	quiet
resus	resuscitation
roids	hemorrhoids
romied	ruled out for myocardial infarction
RR	road rash (RR is slang for this term)
Rx Phys	treating physician
Rx'd	treatment (prescribed)

SC, sc	subcutaneous (subcu is correct)
small-bowel obstruction	small bowel obstruction
SQ	subcutaneous (subcu is correct)
subq	subcutaneous
SUCC	succinylcholine
SUX	succinylcholine
T/spine	thoracic spine
T3	Tylenol with Codeine (30 mg)
tic	diverticulum
TMTC	too many to count
TNTC	too numerous to count
TOP	termination of pregnancy
trake	tracheotomy, tracheostomy
triple A	AAA, abdominal aortic aneurysm
Tylenol #2	Tylenol No. 2 (incorrect format for drug trade name)
Tylenol #3	Tylenol No. 3 (incorrect format for drug trade name)
Tylenol #4	Tylenol No. 4 (incorrect format for drug trade name)
vanc	vancomycin
vit cap	vital capacity
Vtach	ventricular tachycardia
X-ed	crossed
XKO	not knocked out
yo, YO, y/o	-year-old, years old

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APPENDIX B: Acceptable Terms

The abbreviations/brief forms contained in Acceptable Terms list are to be transcribed as dictated. The *Explanation* has been provided for informational purposes only. Account instructions/client profile supersede any term(s) contained in this list.

Disclaimer: The Acceptable Terms list is not meant to be all-inclusive; it is the responsibility of the user to research correct usage of abbreviations and terminology.

Term	Explanation (provided only if not self-explanatory)
A tach	atrial tachycardia
Ab, A	abortion or abortus
ABG	arterial blood gas
ACHOO	autosomal dominant compelling helio-ophthalmic outburst (syndrome)
ACTH	adrenocorticotrophic hormone (corticotropin)
ADHD	attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
ADL and/or ADLs	activities of daily living
AFib	atrial fibrillation
A flutter	atrial flutter
AICD	Automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AIP	acute interstitial pneumonia
AKA	above-knee amputation
alk phos	alkaline phosphatase
allogeneic	
ALS	amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
AMA	against medical advice
AMI	acute myocardial infarction or anterior myocardial infarction (check context for proper expansion)
amp	ampere or ampule (check context for proper expansion)
angioplastied	
AP	anteroposterior
AP/PA	anteroposterior/posteroanterior
ARDS	adult respiratory distress syndrome
AROM	artificial rupture of membranes
arousable	
arouseable	
ASA	acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin)
ASAP	as soon as possible
ASCVD	atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease
ASHD	arteriosclerotic heart disease, atherosclerotic heart disease (check context for proper expansion)
autopsied	
AVSD	atrioventricular septal defect
b.i.d.	twice daily
ballotable, ballotted	
band, stab	neutrophil
baso	basophil
BBB	bundle branch block
bili	bilirubin
BiPAP	bilevel positive airway pressure
BKA	below-knee amputation
BM	bowel movement
bovied	
BP	blood pressure
BPH	benign prostatic hypertrophy or benign prostatic hyperplasia
brady	bradycardia
brady-tachy	bradycardia-tachycardia
BRAT	bananas, rice cereal, applesauce, toast (diet)

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Term (cont)	Explanation (provided only if not self-explanatory)
BRATT	bananas, rice, applesauce, tea, toast (diet)
BUN	blood urea nitrogen
BUS	Bartholin, urethral, and Skene (glands)
C and S	culture and sensitivity
CABG	coronary artery bypass graft
CABGS	coronary artery bypass graft surgery
CAD	coronary artery disease
CAPD	continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis
cardiacwise or cardiac-wise	
CAT	computed axial tomography
CAT scan	computed axial tomography scan
cath	catheter, catheterization
cathed, cath'd	catheterized
CBC, cbc	complete blood (cell) count
cc	cubic centimeter
C-collar	cervical collar
CCU	coronary care unit, critical care unit
CFIDS	chronic fatigue and immune dysfunction syndrome
CHD	congenital heart disease
chem panel	blood chemistry profile
chemo	chemotherapy
CHF	congestive heart failure
CHO	carbohydrate
CJD	Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease
CMS	circulation, motion, sensation
CMV	cytomegalic (inclusion) virus
CN	cranial nerves
COPD	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
cor	Latin for heart
CPAP	continuous positive airway pressure
CPR	cardiopulmonary resuscitation
crepitance	
crit	hematocrit
cryo'd	
crystal meth	methamphetamine
C-section	cesarean section
CSF	cerebrospinal fluid
C-spine	cervical spine
CT	computerized tomography
CTAP	clear to auscultation and percussion
CVA	cerebrovascular accident
CVAT	costovertebral angle tenderness
D and C	dilatation and curettage
D5W	dextrose 5% in water (solution)
DCIS	ductal carcinoma in situ
DEA #	Drug Enforcement Agency number
desufflate	
DIC	disseminated intravascular coagulation
dig level	due to multiple meanings for "dig," transcribe as dictated
DIP	distal interphalangeal (joint)
disk	referencing body structures, e.g., intervertebral or ophthalmic
diuresed	
DJD	degenerative joint disease
DMARD	disease-modifying antirheumatic drug
DNA	deoxyribonucleic acid
DNase, DNase	

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Term (cont)	Explanation (provided only if not self-explanatory)
DNI	do not intubate
DNR	do not resuscitate
DOA	dead on arrival
DOB	date of birth
DOE	dyspnea on exertion
dopplerable	
DPT	diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus (vaccine)
DTP	diphtheria, tetanus toxoid, and acellular pertussis (vaccine)
DTR	deep tendon reflexes
DTs	delirium tremens
DUI	driving under the influence
DWI	driving while impaired, driving while intoxicated
EBT	external beam (photon) therapy
EBV	Epstein-Barr virus
ECG, EKG	electrocardiogram
ECHO	enterocytopathogenic human orphan (virus)
echo	echocardiogram
ECMO	extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, extracorporeal membrane oxygenator
EDC	expected date of confinement
EDOC	estimated date of confinement
EEG	electroencephalogram
ELCA	excimer laser coronary angioplasty
Email or e-mail	
EMG	electromyogram
eo, eos	eosinophil, eosinophils
EOM	extraocular movement, extraocular muscle
EOMI	extraocular movements intact, extraocular muscles intact
ER	emergency room
ERCP	endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography
ESP	extrasensory perception
ESRD	end-stage renal disease
EST	electroshock therapy
EtOH	ethyl alcohol (consumption, dependency)
FADIR	flexion, adduction, internal rotation
FADIRE	flexion, adduction, internal rotation, and extension
FAST	Fourier-acquired steady-state technique
fem-fem	femoral-femoral (bypass)
fem-pop	femoral-popliteal (bypass)
fem-tib	femoral-tibial (bypass)
fen-phen	fenfluramine and phentermine
FeSO ₄	ferrous sulfate
FIGLU	formiminoglutamic acid (test)
FIO ₂	fraction of inspired oxygen
FISH	fluorescent in situ hybridization
FIV	forced inspiratory volume
fluctuance	
flu vax	flu vaccine
FNA	fine-needle aspiration
followup/follow-up, follow up	follow up (verb), followup/follow-up (noun/adjective)
FSH	follicle-stimulating hormone
FVC	forced vital capacity
FYI	for your information
g	gram
GAF	global assessment of functioning
GC	gonococcal (infection)
GC/MS	gas chromatography-mass spectrometry
GCS	Glasgow Coma Score, Glasgow Coma Scale

Term (cont)	Explanation (provided only if not self-explanatory)
GCSF, G-CSF	granulocyte colony-stimulating factor
GERD	gastroesophageal reflux disease
GI	gastrointestinal
GIFT	gamete intrafallopian transfer
GLC/MS, GLCMS	gas-liquid chromatography/mass spectrometry
GP	general practice, general practitioner, general purpose
GRE	gradient-recalled echo
GSW	gunshot wound
GTT	glucose tolerance test
G-tube	gastrostomy tube
GU	genitourinary
H/H, H and H	hemoglobin and hematocrit
H and P	history and physical (examination)
HBOT	hyperbaric oxygen therapy
HCTZ	hydrochlorothiazide
HCV	hepatitis C virus
HDL	high-density lipoprotein
HELLP	hemolysis, elevated liver enzymes, and low platelet (count) or hemolysis, elevated liver enzymes, low platelets.
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HMO	health maintenance organization
Ho:YAG, Ho:YAG laser	holmium:yttrium-aluminum-garnet
HPA	hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (axis)
HPF	high-power field
HPI	history of present illness
h.s.	at bedtime
hyfreated	
hyperlachrymosis	
hyperreflexic	
I and D	incision and drainage, irrigation and debridement
ICD	implantable cardioverter-defibrillator
ICP	intracranial pressure
ICU	intensive care unit
IJ	internal jugular (vein)
INR	international normalized ratio
IU	international unit
IUD	intrauterine (contraceptive) device
IV	intravenous
JVD	jugular venous distention
JVP	jugular venous pressure
K	potassium (kalium)
K wire, K-wire	Kirschner wire
KCI	(dictated "kay-see-el") Transcribe as KCI <i>not</i> Kay Ciel unless author spells it out.
KUB	kidneys, ureters, bladder
KUS	kidneys, ureters, and spleen
lab	laboratory
LABA	laser-assisted balloon angioplasty
LAD	left anterior descending (coronary artery)
LADP	left acromiodorsoposterior (position of fetus)
LAE	long above-elbow (cast)
LASIK	laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis
LDL	low-density lipoprotein
LE	lupus erythematosus
LEEP	loop electrocautery excision procedure, left end-expiratory pressure
LFT	liver function test

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Term (cont)	Explanation (provided only if not self-explanatory)
lightheaded	(no hyphen)
LLE	left lower extremity
LLLL	lids, lashes, lacrimals, lymphatics
LLQ	left lower quadrant
LMP	last menstrual period
LOC	loss of consciousness
LS	lumbosacral
LSD	lysergic acid diethylamide
L-spine	lumbar spine
lumbalgia	
LUQ	left upper quadrant
LVH	left ventricular hypertrophy
lymph	lymphocyte; lymphocytic
lytes	electrolytes; electrolyte panel
max	maximum
MDMA	3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine
medevac'd	
mentating	
MET, METS	metabolic equivalents (multiples of resting oxygen consumption)
MI	myocardial infarction
migrainosis	
MMPI	Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory
modem	modulator/demodulator
modemed	
mono	mononucleosis, monocyte
monos	monocytes
MOTT	mycobacteria other than tubercle
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging
MRSA	methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus
MS	multiple sclerosis
neg	negative
Neuro, neuro	Neurology, neurology; neurologic
neuromuscularly	
neuromusculoskeletal	
NG	nasogastric
NICU	neonatal intensive care unit, newborn intensive care unit
NIDDM	non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus
NIR	near infrared
nitro	nitroglycerin
nitro paste	nitroglycerin paste
nonicteric	
nonweightbearing	
normoxemic	
NPH	neutral protamine Hagedorn (insulin)
n.p.o.	nil per os; nothing by mouth
NQMI	non-Q-wave myocardial infarction
NS	normal saline
NVD	nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
O2	oxygen
OD, OD'd	overdose, overdosed
OJ	orange juice
OK, okay	(either form acceptable)
okayed	(not OK'd)
ORIF	open reduction and internal fixation
OSA	obstructive sleep apnea
Pap	Papanicolaou (smear, test)

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Term (cont)	Explanation (provided only if not self-explanatory)
parietoperitoneum	
path	pathology
PCA	patient-controlled analgesia
PCN	penicillin
PCP	primary care physician
PCV	packed cell volume, polycythemia vera
PE	physical examination, pulmonary embolism, physical education
Peds, peds	Pediatrics, pediatrics
PEG	percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy
PEG-J	percutaneous endoscopic gastrojejunostomy
PERL	pupils equal and react to light
PERLA	pupils equal, reactive to light and accommodation
PERRLA	pupils equal, round, reactive to light and accommodation
PIC	peripherally inserted catheter
PICC	percutaneously (or peripherally) inserted central catheter
PIP	proximal interphalangeal (joint)
PKU	phenylketonuria
plateaued	
PMD	private (or personal) medical doctor
PMH	past medical history
PMI	point of maximal impulse
PND	paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea
p.o.	by mouth, orally
PO2, pO2, PCO2, pCO2	All acceptable, but capitalize first letter if at the beginning of a sentence.
polio	poliomyelitis
poly	polymorphonuclear (leukocyte); polymorphonuclear neutrophilic granulocyte (leukocyte)
pos	positive
postop	postoperative
pot	marijuana
preemie, premie	premature
preop'd	
prep	prepare, preparation
prepped	prepared
p.r.n.	as needed
PSA	prostate-specific antigen
psych	psychiatric, psychiatry, psychologic, psychology
pt	patient
PT	prothrombin time
PTCA	percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty
PTT	partial thromboplastin time
PUD	peptic ulcer disease
pulse ox	pulse oximetry
PVC	premature ventricular contraction
q.2 h.	every 2 hours
q.3 h.	every 3 hours
q.4 h.	every 4 hours
q.h.s.	at bedtime, nightly
q.i.d.	4 times daily
RA	rheumatoid arthritis
RBC	red blood cell
respiratorily	
Rh	Rhesus (factor)
rhonchorous	
RLE	right lower extremity
ROM	range of motion, right otitis media, rupture of membranes

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Term (cont)	Explanation (provided only if not self-explanatory)
ROS	review of systems
rouseable	
rouseable	
RRR	regular rate and rhythm
RUE	right upper extremity
RUQ	right upper quadrant
Rx	prescription, prescription drug
S7	summation gallop
SAB	spontaneous abortion
SaO2	arterial oxygen saturation
sat, satted, satting	saturation, saturated, saturating
SBE	subacute bacterial endocarditis
scope	endoscopic procedure or endoscopic instrument
script	prescription
sed rate	sedimentation rate
sib, sibs	sibling, siblings
SIDS	sudden infant death syndrome
SIOS	subcutaneous insulin order sets
SLUDGE	salivation, lacrimation, urination, defecation, gastrointestinal distress and emesis
SMAC	Sequential Multiple Analyzer Computer
SMZ-TMP, SMX-TMP	sulfamethoxazole-trimethoprim
SNF	skilled nursing facility (dictated as "sniff")
SOAP	subjective (data), objective (data), assessment, and plan (problem-oriented record)
SOB	shortness of breath
spasming	
SSRI	selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor
staph	staphylococcus
STAT, stat	at once
STD	sexually transmitted disease
strep	streptococcus
stye (plural: styes)	hordeolum
subcu	subcutaneous
SVT	supraventricular tachycardia
T and A	tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy
t.i.d.	three times a day
Tab	tablet
TAB	therapeutic abortion
tach, tachy	tachycardia
tachy-brady	tachycardia-bradycardia
TAH	total abdominal hysterectomy
TAH-BSO, TAHBSO	total abdominal hysterectomy and bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy
TB	tuberculosis
tbs, tbsp	tablespoon
TEE	transesophageal echocardiography
temp	temperature
TENS	transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulator
THC	tetrahydrocannabinol
THORP	titanium hollow-screw osseointegrating reconstruction plate
TIA	transient ischemic attack
tib-fib	tibia and fibula
till	conjunction or preposition meaning until
TKO	to keep open (vein for IV)
T-max	maximum temperature; time of maximal concentration
TMP-SMZ, TMP-SMX	trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole
TNM	(primary) tumor, (regional lymph) node, (remote) metastases (classification, staging)
TOPS	Take Off Pounds Sensibly

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Term (cont)	Explanation (provided only if not self-explanatory)
TPN	total parenteral nutrition
trach	tracheotomy, tracheostomy
TRISS	Trauma and Injury Severity Score, Trauma-Related Injury Severity Score
ts, tsp	teaspoon
T-spine	thoracic spine
TTE	transthoracic echocardiography
TUNA	transurethral needle ablation
TURP	transurethral prostatectomy; transurethral resection of prostate
UA	urinalysis
URI	upper respiratory illness
UTI	urinary tract infection
UVA	ultraviolet A
UVB	ultraviolet B
UVC	ultraviolet C
V tach	ventricular tachycardia
vax	vaccine, vaccination
VBAC	vaginal birth after cesarean (section)
VCU, VCUg	voiding cystourethrogram
VD	venereal disease
VFib	ventricular fibrillation
water-pik'd	
weightbearing	
WNL	within normal limits
YTD	year to date

APPENDIX C: Prohibited Abbreviations

Below is *The Joint Commission, Official Do Not Use List*. Follow this list unless otherwise noted in the account instructions/client profile.

Official "Do Not Use" List¹

Do Not Use	Potential Problem	Use Instead
U (unit)	Mistaken for "0" (zero), the number "4" (four) or "cc"	Write "unit"
IU (International Unit)	Mistaken for IV (intravenous) or the number 10 (ten)	Write "International Unit"
Q.D., QD, q.d., qd (daily)	Mistaken for each other	Write "daily"
Q.O.D., QOD, q.o.d, qod (every other day)	Period after the Q mistaken for "I" and the "O" mistaken for "l"	Write "every other day"
Trailing zero (X.0 mg)* Lack of leading zero (.X mg)	Decimal point is missed	Write X mg Write 0.X mg
MS	Can mean morphine sulfate or magnesium sulfate	Write "morphine sulfate" Write "magnesium sulfate"
MSO ₄ and MgSO ₄	Confused for one another	

¹ Applies to all orders and all medication-related documentation that is handwritten (including free-text computer entry) or on pre-printed forms.

*Exception: A "trailing zero" may be used only where required to demonstrate the level of precision of the value being reported, such as for laboratory results, imaging studies that report size of lesions, or catheter/tube sizes. It may not be used in medication orders or other medication-related documentation.

APPENDIX D: Words That Sound Alike or Look Alike

Many words in the English language look alike or sound alike but have very different meanings. Below is a brief list of some of the most commonly confused words.

amenable – responsive to advice, authority or suggestion; willing

amendable – able to be altered, modified, rephrased; able to be added to or subtracted from by formal procedure; able to be improved

Apgar – score of a newborn’s condition; pulse, breathing, color, tone, and reflex irritability

APGAR – family screening acronym; adaptability, partnership, growth, affection, and resolve

ascitic – pertaining to ascites

acidic – having characteristics of acid

acetic –resembling, containing, or producing acetic acid, or vinegar

abduction – moving away from the midline

adduction – drawing toward the midline

accede – to comply with or to give consent

exceed – to surpass or go beyond

accept – to take or receive

except – to exclude, take out or omit

aid – to give help or assistance

aide – one who gives help or assistance

advice (noun) – information or recommendation

advise (verb) – to recommend or give counsel

affect (verb) – to influence or change.

(noun) – a disposition or tendency. In medical usage, this term is used in psychology reports to refer to a patient’s outward appearance of an inner mood: The patient’s affect was flat.

effect (noun) – a result or impression: The effect of the earthquake was terrible.

(verb) – to bring about: This medication should effect a cure. (Effect is most often used as a noun.)

afferent – toward the center

efferent – outward away from the center

allude – make a vague reference

elude – escape or avoid

ante – occurring before

anti – against

antritis – inflammation of an antrum; maxillary sinusitis

enteritis – inflammation of the intestine; usually referring only to the small intestine

aphagia – refusal or inability to swallow

aphasia – speech disorder or inability to comprehend spoken or written words

apposition – side by side; in medical terminology, it means the placing of things in juxtaposition or proximity, such as bringing the edges of a wound together in *apposition*.

opposition – the act of being opposite, or the state of being set in opposite manner

appraise – to set a value on; to evaluate the worth, significance, or status of; to give an expert judgment

apprise – to give notice; to tell or inform

avulsion – the ripping or tearing away of a part, either surgically or accidentally

evulsion – forcible extraction

awhile – adverb meaning for a short time
a while – noun meaning a short period of time

axis – a line about which a revolving body turns or would turn if it could rotate, a line around which specified parts of the body are arranged; the 2nd cervical vertebra

access – a means of approaching, entering, exiting, communicating with, or making use of
excess – more than the usual, proper, or specified amount; superfluity

BNP – brain natriuretic peptide, or B-type natriuretic peptide, a hormone in the blood that indicates cardiac function

BMP – basic metabolic panel, a group of 8 tests (or sometimes 7 tests) ordered as a screening to check for conditions such as diabetes and kidney disease

breach – result of breaking, break, or rupture

breach – the lower rear part of the trunk or body; buttocks

buccal – adjacent to or pertaining to the cheek

buckle – an object to hold a belt together; to bend, crimp or crumple

bolus – a single, large amount of a medication given all at once

bulbus – a rounded mass or enlargement

bullous – relating to bullae

callous – hard like a callus

callus – hardened or thickened area of skin; meshwork of woven bone forming at the site of a healing fracture

carotid – pertaining to the principal artery of the neck (common carotid artery)

parotid – situated or occurring near the ear, as the parotid gland

cholic – an acid; relating to bile

colic – acute abdominal pain

cirrhosis – liver disease

xerosis – abnormal dryness

CNS – an abbreviation for the central nervous system, i.e., the brain and spinal cord

C and S – an abbreviation for culture and sensitivity testing used to identify pathogens

coarse – rough, opposite of fine: The patient's hair was coarse. Coarse rales were heard in both lungs.

course – regular or natural progression: The disease must run its course.

conscience – guilt; knowledge or sense of right or wrong: His conscience bothered him after he stole the apple.

conscious – aware of one's surroundings: The patient was awake and conscious.

diathesis – a hereditary predisposition of the body to a disease, a group of diseases, an allergy or other disorder

diaphysis – shaft of a long bone between the epiphyses

depo – short form to indicate any drug that begins with those four letters; this should not be used except in verbatim accounts

depot – refers to an injection of a drug in specialized medium which results in a gradual release of the medication over an extended period

dilation – the process of enlarging a passage or anastomosis

dilatation – the condition of being dilated or stretched beyond the normal dimension

disc – an alternate spelling of disk

disk – the preferred spelling of this round, flat, regular and regularly condensed plate of material

discreet – showing good judgment in speech and actions

discrete – separate or distinct: There was a large, discrete mass in the abdomen.

diseased – ill, sick; a condition of the body that impairs health or vital function
deceased – no longer living; expired; recently dead

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DNA – genetic material within chromosomes
D and E – dilation and extraction (obstetrical procedure)

dysphagia – difficulty swallowing
dysphasia – difficulty speaking

eczema – a type of dermatitis
exemia – loss of fluid from the blood vessels

effusion – the escape of fluid from anatomical vessels by rupture or exudation
infusion – the continuous slow introduction of a solution, especially into a vein

elicit – to bring out: Hopefully this will elicit a response.
illicit – illegal, such as illicit drugs

eminent – outstanding, as in character or performance; prominent
imminent – close in time, ready to take place

eversion – a turning inside out, e.g., ectropion; a turning outward, as of the sole of the foot or the eyelid
inversion – a turning inward or reversal of the normal relation of a part, e.g., visceral inversion is the right and left transposition of the viscera

every day – occurring each day
everyday – ordinary, usual, as an everyday occurrence

exenterated – involving the surgical removal of inner organs; commonly used to indicate a radical excision of the contents of a body cavity, such as the pelvis (the synonym of exenteration is evisceration)
exonerated – relieved of responsibility, obligation, or hardship; to clear from accusation or blame

eyelet – a small hole for receiving a rope or cord
islet – a cluster of cells; an island

fascicular – pertaining to a tract, bundle, or group of nerve fibers that are associated functionally
vesicular – containing or composed of vesicles, membranous fluid-filled pouch (cyst, vacuole, cell)

fetal – pertaining to a fetus
pedal – pertaining to the feet

flexure – the state of being flexed; turn, bend, fold
flexor – a muscle serving to bend a body part, such as a limb

followup or follow-up – noun or adjective form of the phrase. Single word (followup) is preferred. Hyphenated (follow-up) is an acceptable alternative.

follow up – verb form of the phrase. Always 2 words.

HINT: If you can replace dictated “follow up” with another verb, then it is a verb and should be typed as 2 words, e.g., He will “follow up” (verb) today. He will “run” (verb) today.

H and P – history and physical
HNP – herniated nucleus pulposus

heroin – an addictive, white, crystalline powder derived from morphine
heroine – a woman noted for courage and daring action; principal female character in a book or play

heterogeneous – consisting of dissimilar elements or ingredients
heterogenous – of foreign origin

homocysteine - naturally occurring amino acid in blood plasma found to be elevated in heart disease, stroke, Alzheimer's, and osteoporosis, i.e., homocystinemia

homocystine - an amino acid resulting from the oxidation of homocysteine and excreted in the urine in homocystinuria

homogeneous – having a uniform structure or composition; the same kind or nature

homogenous – genetic term referring to descent from a common ancestral type

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homonomous - Denoting parts, having similar form and structure, arranged in a series, e.g., fingers or toes

homonymous - Having the same name or expressed in the same terms, e.g., the corresponding halves (right or left, superior or inferior) of the retinas.

humeral – pertaining to the humerus

humoral – pertaining to the humors (any fluid or fluid-like substance of the human body)

ileum – distal portion of the colon (ileum = bowel)

ilium – superior portion of the hip bone (ilium = hip)

insure – take out or issue insurance on something or someone

ensure – to make sure; to guarantee

installation – something installed for use; a military base or camp

instillation – to cause to enter drop by drop, as with medication

inter – a prefix meaning among or between

intra – a prefix meaning within

it's – contraction for *it is* or *it has*

its – possessive pronoun indicating ownership: The dog raised its head.

laying – placing or putting, as in laying a book on the desk

lying – reclining on a surface, as in: The patient was lying in bed.

loop – an oval or circle formed by bending a wire, thread, vessel, etc.

loupe – a magnifying glass

lose – misplace; also, fail to win, as to lose a race

loose – not tight, as in loose closure or loose sutures; also, to free, as to loose a structure from adhesions

maybe – perhaps; implies that something might happen

may be – has the ability to happen; stronger than maybe. It implies that something can happen.

melenic – marked by melena (e.g., dark, tarry stools)

melanotic – with dark pigment of skin, hair, or tumors

miotic – causing contraction of the pupil of the eye

myopic – nearsighted

mortis – Latin term meaning death, as in rigor mortis

mortise – the seat of the talus, formed by the union of the distal tibia and fibula at the ankle joint

mucous – pertaining to mucus

mucus – secretions of the mucous membranes

myasthenia – weakness of the muscles

myesthesia – sensation felt when a muscle contracts

nitrate – coronary vasodilators (nitrate = heart)

nitrite – nitrates converted to nitrite by bacteria in the urine (nitrite = urine)

osmolality – test of concentration of a solution, used to determine the concentration of urine or serum; results expressed in milliosmoles per kilogram

osmolarity – concentration of an osmotic solution, e.g., urine or blood serum; expressed in osmoles per liter

osteal – bony

ostial – pertaining to an ostium or opening

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palpation – the act of feeling with the hand; the application of the fingers with light pressure to the surface of the body to determine the consistency of the parts beneath in physical diagnosis, e.g., bimanual palpation

palpitation – to move frequently and rapidly; the subjective sensation of a rapid or irregular heartbeat

parameter – a characteristic, element, or attribute of a set of physical properties

perimeter – a line or strip around an area; boundary; the outer limits

paronychia – a skin infection around a finger or toenail

perionychia – inflammation of the epidermis overlying and in direct contact with the nail root or the sides of the nail plate, forming the undersurface of the nail wall or nail folds (hidden nail skin/perionychium/epionychium)

perfuse – to force a fluid through (an organ or tissue) especially by way of the blood vessels

profuse – extravagant, bountiful

perfusion – the passage of blood or other fluid through the vessels of the body, or parts of it: There was good perfusion of both lower extremities.

profusion – an abundance, pouring forth

peroneal – pertaining to the outer or fibular side of the leg

perineal – pertaining to the area between the anus and genitalia

peritoneal – pertaining to the peritoneum

perspective – one's ideas

prospective – in the future; potential

phosphorus – a highly reactive poisonous nonmetallic element occurring naturally in phosphates

phosphorous – relating to or containing phosphorus

plain – in radiology, those films taken without the injection of contrast material

plane – flat, level, or even; also, imaginary line dividing the body, as in frontal plane, sagittal plane, etc.

pleural – pertaining to the pleura surrounding each lung

plural – meaning more than one

pleuritis – inflammation of the pleura

pruritus – itching

pressor – tending to increase blood pressure

pressure – the application of force to something by direct contact, compression; the burden of physical or mental distress

principal – a leader or the most important, consequential, or influential, i.e., principal diagnosis

principle – a rule or standard

prosthetic – an artificial device for a missing body part

prostatic – relating to the prostate gland

prostate – a gland found in males surrounding the neck of the bladder and urethra

prostrate – lying flat with the face down

radical – extreme, drastic or innovative; fundamental, basic: The patient had a radical mastectomy.

radicle – any one of the smallest branches of a vessel or nerve: The renal vein radicles were ligated.

regard – concerning, about, attention: With regard to the lab results, platelet count was abnormal.

regards – esteem, respect, admiration: Give my regards to Mr. Jones.

saline – salty

xylene – a colorless, flammable liquid hydrocarbon used as a solvent

salsalate – a type of salicylate with analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antipyretic and antirheumatic effects

salicylate – a class of drugs with analgesic, anti-inflammatory, and antipyretic properties, e.g., aspirin.

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scleredema – unusual swelling of the facial area

scleroderma – chronic thickening and hardening of the skin

xeroderma – a mild form of ichthyosis, a genetic skin disorder causing abnormal scaling of the skin

shoddy – of poor quality or workmanship

shotty – resembling B-Bs or buckshot: The patient has numerous shotty nodes.

sight – vision; the ability to see

site – location: Clips were seen at the site of the aneurysm.

cite – to quote: The patient began to cite a list of his illnesses.

some time – an unspecified amount or period of time: Set aside some time to study.

sometime – at some unspecified time in the future: I will see you sometime tomorrow.

super – superior, better, excessive, more inclusive, e.g., supertherapeutic: therapeutic to a superlative degree, displaying the strongest possible therapeutic qualities

supra – greater than, beyond, outside, transcending, e.g., supratherapeutic: beyond therapeutic, above or outside of all therapeutic qualities

tachy – rapid, accelerated, as in tachycardia (rapid heart beat)

tacky – in poor taste, shabby, seedy, cheap, gaudy; somewhat sticky to the touch

their – belonging to them

there – in that place

they're – contraction of *they are*

track – a path along which something moves or the mark left by its movement: The patella tracked normally.

tract – an elongated area, a passage or pathway: We then probed the sinus tract.

versus – as opposed to; in contrast with

verses – pertaining to lines of poetry or music; sections of the Bible.

vesical – pertaining to the bladder

vesicle – a small sac containing fluid

weeks – plural of week: Our vacation this year is for 2 weeks.

week's – possessive of week: He paid a week's rent in advance.

weeks' – possessive of weeks: Amniocentesis was performed at 22 weeks' gestation.

HINT: If you can replace the possessive form with the preposition "of" without changing meaning, apostrophe use is correct.

who's – contraction of *who is* or *who has*

whose – possessive pronoun indicating ownership: The patient, whose surgery was scheduled, was admitted.

worse – more unfavorable, difficult, or painful; being in poorer health: The fever is getting worse, not better.

worst – the most unfavorable, difficult, or painful; most wanting in quality, value or condition: The pain was the worst she had ever felt.

HINT: Worse is a comparative; worst is a superlative.

your – belonging to you

you're – contraction of *you are*

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