

JCAHO Forbidden Abbreviations		
Abbreviations	Potential Problem	Preferred Term
U (for unit)	Mistaken for zero, four or cc.	Write "unit"
IU (for international unit)	Mistaken for IV (intravenous) or 10 (ten).	Write "international unit"
Q.D., Q.O.D. (Latin abbreviation for once daily and every other day)	Mistaken for each other. The period after the Q can be mistaken for an "I" and the "O" can be mistaken for "I."	Write "daily" or "every other day"
Trailing zero (X.0 mg), Lack of leading zero (.X mg)	Decimal point is missed.	Never write a zero by itself after a decimal point (X mg), and always use a zero before a decimal point (0.X mg)
MS MSO <sub>4</sub> MgSO <sub>4</sub>	Confused for one another. Can mean morphine sulfate or magnesium sulfate.	Write "morphine sulfate" or "magnesium sulfate"

**\*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.

<b>Other “Not To Be Used” Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols</b>		
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>Potential Problem</b>	<b>Preferred Item</b>
µg	Mistaken for mg (milligrams) resulting in one thousandfold dosing overdose.	Write “mcg”
H.S. (for half-strength or Latin abbreviation for bedtime)	Mistaken for either halfstrength or hour of sleep (at bedtime). q.H.S. mistaken for every hour. All can result in a dosing error.	Write out “half-strength” or “at bedtime”
T.I.W. (for three times a week)	Mistaken for three times a day or twice weekly resulting in an overdose.	Write “3 times weekly” or “three times weekly”
S.C. or S.Q. (for subcutaneous)	Mistaken for SL for sublingual, or “5 every”.	Write “Sub-Q”, “subQ”, or subcutaneously
D/C (for discharge)	Interpreted as discontinue whatever medications follow (typically discharge meds).	Write “discharge”
c.c. (for cubic centimeter)	Mistaken for U (units) when poorly written.	Write “ml” for milliliters
A.S., A.D., A.U. (Latin abbreviation for left, right, or both ears) O.S., O.D., O.U. (Latin abbreviation for left, right, or both eyes)	Mistaken for each other (e.g., AS for OS, AD for OD, AU for OU, etc.)	Write “left ear,” “right ear” or “both ears;” “left eye,” “right eye,” or “both eyes”

<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>Potential Problem</b>	<b>Preferred Term</b>
> and <	Mistakenly used opposite of intended	Use "greater than" or "less than"
/ (slash mark)	Misunderstood as the number 1 ("25 unit/10 units" read as "110" units.	Do not use a slash mark to separate doses. Use "per."