

# DO NOT USE

## Dangerous Abbreviations, Symbols, and Dose Designations

Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada

For a more concise version, see: [ismpcanada.ca/do-not-use-list](https://ismpcanada.ca/do-not-use-list)

### ALWAYS USE

DO NOT USE	INTENDED MEANING	COMMON ERRORS	ALWAYS USE
<b>Abbreviations of medication names</b>			
<b>Abbreviated medication name</b> (e.g., MSO4, MTX)	Medication name	Mistaken for a different medication	Use <b>full name of medication</b>
<b>Abbreviations for units of measurement</b>			
<b>U</b>	units	Mistaken for O, or numeral 0 (zero)	Use <b>units</b>
<b>IU</b>	International units	Mistaken for numeral 10, or IV	Use <b>International units</b>
<b>ug, µg</b>	micrograms	Mistaken for mg (milligrams)	Use <b>microgram</b> or <b>mcg</b>
<b>cc</b>	cubic centimetre	Mistaken for numeral 00, or 'u'	Use <b>millilitre</b> or <b>mL</b>
<b>Abbreviations of frequency or duration</b>			
<b>OD, QD</b>	Every day	OD mistaken for numeral 00, or right eye QD mistaken for four times per day, or numeral 00	Use <b>daily</b>
<b>QOD, EOD</b>	Every other day	QOD mistaken for four times per day, or once daily EOD mistaken for once daily	Use <b>every other day</b>
<b>D, d</b>	Days or doses	Mistaken for each other (e.g., 5D intended as 5 days was mistaken for 5 doses; bid x 2d intended as 2 doses was mistaken for 2 days) Mistaken for numeral 0 (zero)	Use <b>days</b> or <b>doses</b>
<b>x/7, y/52</b>	Number of days, number of weeks	Mistaken as number of weeks Mistaken as number of years, or days	Use <b>x days, y weeks</b>
<b>Latin abbreviations for route</b>			
<b>AS, AD, AU</b>	Left ear, right ear, both ears	Mistaken for left eye, right eye, both eyes Mistaken for one another	Use <b>left ear, right ear, both ears</b>
<b>OS, OD, OU</b>	Left eye, right eye, both eyes	Mistaken for left ear, right ear, both ears OD mistaken for once daily Mistaken for one another	Use <b>left eye, right eye, both eyes</b>
<b>Symbols and other abbreviations</b>			
<b>&lt; &gt;</b>	Less than or greater than	Mistaken for opposite than intended, or for numerals	Use <b>less than, lower than</b> or <b>more than, greater than</b>
<b>@</b>	at	Mistaken for numerals 0 (zero) or 2	Use <b>at</b>
<b>D/C medication A, medication B</b>	Discharge with list of medications that follow	Mistaken as discontinue list of medications that follow	Use <b>discharge</b> when referring to a discharge with medications from a care area. <i>Where <b>discontinue</b> is intended, <b>stop</b> or <b>discontinue</b> may be safer alternatives.</i>
<b>Numeric representations or dose designations</b>			
<b>i, ii, iii, iv, ... I, II, III, IV, ... Ī, ĪĪ, ĪĪĪ, ...</b>	Roman numerals	Mistaken for numerals (e.g., ii and ĪĪ mistaken for 11), or mistaken for route (e.g., IV), or unrecognized	Use the intended <b>Arabic numerals</b> , or <b>spell out the numeral</b> .
<b>X.0</b> (trailing zero)	X	Mistaken for 10 times greater than intended due to decimal point not recognized	Use <b>X</b> <i>Never use zeroes after a decimal point.</i>
<b>.X</b> (lack of leading zero)	0.X	Mistaken for 10 times greater than intended due to decimal point not recognized	Use <b>0.X</b> <i>Always use a zero before a decimal point.</i>