

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY
FORT HUACHUCA, ARIZONA 85613-7040

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Medical Services
UNACCEPTABLE ABBREVIATION AND SYMBOL LIST

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1. **HISTORY.** This issue publishes a revision of this publication.
2. **PURPOSE.** To define unacceptable abbreviations and symbols for use within Raymond W. Bliss Army Health Center (RWBAHC).
3. **REFERENCES.** Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations Sentinel Event Alert on Medication Errors Related to Unacceptable Abbreviations and Symbol List.
4. **SCOPE.** This policy applies to health care providers including nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and privileged providers involved in patient care at RWBAHC.
5. **GENERAL.** At Appendix A is the Unacceptable Abbreviation and Symbol List not to be used by healthcare providers assigned to RWBAHC.
6. **GOALS.** To have a positive impact on improving patient care.

*This publication is a revision of MEDDAC Memo 40-166, 9 January 2004

The proponent of this publication is Chief, Quality Management Division. Users are invited to send their comments and suggestions on DA 2028, to MCXJ-QM, Fort Huachuca, AZ 85613-7040.

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APPENDIX A

Unacceptable Abbreviation and Symbol List

Do NOT use any of the following when ordering or prescribing

Unacceptable Abbreviation	Example	Why NOT to use	What is acceptable practice
1. U (for unit)	3U	Mistaken as zero, four or cc	Write “unit”
2. IU (for International Unit)	3IU	Mistaken as IV or 10	Write “International unit”
3. Using shorthand or code that contains dosage interval	Q.D.	Can be confused for Q.O.D.	Write out the word “daily”
4. Using shorthand or code That contains dosage interval	Q.O.D.	Can be confused for Q.D.	Write out the word “every other day”
5. Trailing zero	3.0 mg	Decimal point is missed	Write X mg
6. Lack of leading zero	.5 mg		Write 0.X mg
7. MS		Can mean morphine sulfate or magnesium sulfate	Write “morphine sulfate”
8. MSO4		Confused for MgSO4	Write “magnesium sulfate”
9. MgSO4		Confused for MSO4	Write “magnesium sulfate”

APPENDIX B**Sound-Alike/Look-Alike Drugs****Table I & II**

Clonidine	Clonazepam
Ephedrine	Epinephrine
Fentanyl	Sufentanil
Lamisil	Lamictal
Novolin 70/30	Novolog
Serzone	Seroquel

Table III

Acetohexamide	Acetazolamide
Chlorpropamide	Chlorpromazine
Wellbutrin SR	Wellbutrin XL
Zantac	Xanax
Zantac	Zyrtec