



# Preferred Clinical Abbreviation List

Release 5 (17 June 2018)

# Preferred Clinical Abbreviation List

**17 June 2018 v5**

## **Introduction**

Abbreviations have a long tradition in medicine and used correctly can assist in the rapid communication of information about a patient. However, since some abbreviations can have multiple meanings, or are only used regularly within one speciality, using them can represent a hazard to the patient if the abbreviation is misinterpreted.

Whilst writing information in full will always be preferred as the best way to avoid ambiguity, it is accepted that they are commonly used in medical communications.

As a means of promoting the accurate transfer of information between professionals and striking a practical balance, this document acts as a list of approved abbreviations which can be used in interagency communications. It will also provide patients with a dictionary of medical abbreviations helping them to understand medical records and correspondence.

The most obvious use of such a directory will be the transfer of information between primary and secondary care. However, it is also useful for writing patient notes to assist trainees, locums and other specialities, or when primary care notes are transferred between practices as patients move.

Abbreviations not included in this document should be written in full in correspondence between agencies.

**Dr Jonathan Harness**

On behalf of Newcastle Gateshead Information Network.

| Abbreviation    | Translation  |
|-----------------|--|
| /7              | Days   |
| /52             | Weeks  |
| /40             | Weeks Gestation  |
| /12             | Months   |
| + / ++ / +++    | Present or Noted / Present Significantly / Present in Excess     |
| =               | Equivalent to  |
| AAA             | Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm  |
| ABG             | Arterial Blood Gas also "Sats"                                   |
| ACC             | Ambulatory Care Clinic (Gateshead)                               |
| ACEI            | Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitor                    |
| ACL             | Anterior Cruciate Ligament                                       |
| ADRT            | Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment                             |
| A/E             | Air Entry to Lungs   |
| A&E             | Accident and Emergency (phasing out in favour of Emergency Dept) |
| AF              | Atrial Fibrillation  |
| AFP             | Alpha Fetaprotein  |
| ALL / AML       | Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia / Acute Myeloid Leukaemia          |
| ARB             | Angiotensin Receptor Blocker                                     |
| ASD             | Atrial Septal Defect   |
| AXR             | Abdominal X-Ray  |
| bd/bid          | Twice a Day  |
| BCC             | Basal Cell Carcinoma   |
| BFZ             | Bendroflumethiazide  |
| BMI             | Body Mass Index  |
| BNO             | Bowels Not Opened  |
| BO              | Bowels Open  |
| BP              | Blood Pressure   |
| DBP             | Diastolic Blood Pressure   |
| SBP             | Systolic Blood Pressure  |
| CABG/S or CAG/S | Coronary Artery (Bypass) Graft/Surgery                           |
| CCB             | Calcium Channel Blocker  |
| CFS             | Chronic Fatigue Syndrome   |
| (CHD)           | (Coronary Heart Disease – Ischaemic Heart Disease preferred)     |
| CNS             | Central Nervous System   |
| C/o             | Complains of   |
| (COAD)          | Chronic Obstructive Airways Disease (COPD preferred)             |
| COCP            | Combined Oral Contraceptive                                      |
| COPD            | Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease                            |
| Cr              | Creatinine   |

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| CSU                        | Catheter specimen of urine  |
| CT                         | Computerised Axial Tomography   |
| CTG                        | Cardiotocograph   |
| CVA                        | Cerebrovascular Accident  |
| CVD                        | Cardiovascular Disease  |
| CVS                        | Cardiovascular System   |
| CXR                        | Chest X-ray   |
| D&V                        | Diarrhoea and Vomiting  |
| D/H                        | Drug History  |
| DIP, PIP                   | Dorsal/proximal interphalangeal joints                                  |
| DLE                        | Discoid Lupus Erythematosus   |
| DM                         | Diabetes Mellitus   |
| DNA                        | Did Not Attend  |
| DNAR                       | Do Not Attempt Resuscitation (Sometimes written as DNACPR)              |
| DVT                        | Deep Vein Thrombosis  |
| EAU                        | Emergency Assessment Unit   |
| ECC                        | Emergency Care Centre (Gateshead)                                       |
| ECG                        | Electrocardiograph  |
| EEG                        | Electroencephalogram  |
| EMG                        | Electromyography  |
| ENT                        | Ear, Nose & Throat  |
| EPAU                       | Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit   |
| ERCP                       | Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography                          |
| ERPC                       | Evacuation of Retained Products of Conception                           |
| ESR                        | Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate  |
| FBC                        | Full Blood Count  |
| FBG                        | Fasting Blood Glucose   |
| F/H or FH                  | Family History  |
| FHH/R                      | Foetal Heart Heard/Regular  |
| FRH                        | Freeman Road Hospital   |
| FROM                       | Full Range of Movement  |
| FTND                       | Full Term Normal Delivery   |
| GCS                        | Glasgow Coma Scale  |
| GI or GIT                  | Gastro Intestinal/Tract   |
| GORD                       | Gastro-Oesophageal Reflux Disease                                       |
| GTN                        | Glyceryl Trinitrate   |
| GUT or GUS                 | Genito Urinary Tract/ System  |
| GUM                        | Genito-Urinary Medicine   |
| HAV/ HBV / HCV / HDV / HEV | Hepatitis [A, B, C, D or E] Virus. (Hep A, Hep B etc is sometimes used) |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Hb       | Haemoglobin  |
| HI       | Head Injury  |
| HL / NHL | Hodgkins Lymphoma / Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma                                  |
| HNPU     | Has Not Passed Urine   |
| HR       | Heart Rate   |
| HS       | Heart Sounds   |
| Ht       | Height   |
| Hx       | History (of complaint)   |
| IBD      | Inflammatory Bowel Disease   |
| IBS      | Irritable Bowel Syndrome   |
| ICD      | Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (or Internal Cardiac Defibrillator) |
| IGT      | Impaired Glucose Tolerance   |
| IGTN     | In Growing Toenail   |
| IHD      | Ischaemic Heart Disease  |
| IMB      | Intermenstrual Bleeding  |
| IOP      | Intra-ocular Pressure  |
| ITP      | Idiopathic Thrombocytopaenia Purpura                                       |
| IUCD     | Intra-uterine contraceptive device   |
| IUD      | Intra-uterine death  |
| IUS      | Intra-uterine system   |
| IVP      | Intravenous Pyelogram  |
| Ix       | Investigations   |
| JVP      | Jugular Venous Pressure  |
| K+       | Potassium  |
| KUB      | Kidneys, Ureters, Bladder (xray)   |
| LAD      | Left Anterior Descending Artery (of heart)                                 |
| LBBB     | Left Bundle Branch Block   |
| LFT      | Liver Function Test  |
| LIF      | Left Iliac Fossa   |
| LIH      | Left Inguinal Hernia   |
| LOC      | Loss of Consciousness  |
| LN       | Lymph Node   |
| LP       | Lumbar puncture  |
| L/R/ IH  | Left or Right Inguinal Hernia  |
| LSCS     | Lower (Uterine) Segment Caesarean section                                  |
| LUQ      | Left Upper Quadrant  |
| LVDD     | Left Ventricular Diastolic Dysfunction                                     |
| LVSD     | Left Ventricular Systolic Dysfunction                                      |
| Mane     | In the Morning   |
| MAU      | Medical Admissions Unit (for Gateshead EAU now used)                       |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| MCV    | Mean Corpuscular Volume  |
| MDS    | Myelodysplastic Syndrome                                       |
| MDT    | Multi-disciplinary Team  |
| ME     | Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome preferred) |
| MET/S  | Metastases   |
| MI     | Myocardial infarction (NSTEMI or STEMI preferred)              |
| MPD    | Myeloproliferative Disorder (sometimes written MPN)            |
| MRCP   | Magnetic Resonance Cholangiopancreatography                    |
| MRI    | Magnetic Resonance Imaging                                     |
| MS     | Multiple Sclerosis (Write in full: Mitral Stenosis)            |
| MSK    | Musculo-Skeletal System  |
| MSE    | Mental State Examination                                       |
| MSU    | Mid-Stream Urine Sample (for culture and sensitivity)          |
| MTX    | Methotrexate   |
| Na+    | Sodium   |
| NAD    | Nothing Abnormal Discovered                                    |
| NBI    | No Bone Injury   |
| Nocte  | At Night   |
| NSTEMI | Non ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction                         |
| N&V    | Nausea & Vomiting  |
| NVD    | Normal Vaginal Delivery  |
| O2     | Oxygen   |
| OA     | Osteoarthritis   |
| o.d.   | Once a Day   |
| O/E    | On Examination   |
| OGD    | Oesophago-gastro-duodenoscopy                                  |
| OGTT   | Oral Glucose Tolerance Test                                    |
| on     | At Night (when written next to medication dosing only)         |
| om     | In the Morning (when written next to medication dosing only)   |
| OM     | Otitis Media   |
| ORIF   | Open Reduction and Internal Fixation (of fracture)             |
| otc    | Over the counter (bought medication)                           |
| P      | Pulse  |
| PAD    | Peripheral Arterial Disease                                    |
| PBC    | Primary Biliary Cirrhosis                                      |
| PCB    | Post Coital Bleeding   |
| PCI    | Percutaneous Coronary Intervention                             |
| PE     | Pulmonary Embolism   |
| PEG    | Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy                            |
| PERLA  | Pupils equal and reacting to light and accommodation           |

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| PF / PEFR    | Peak Flow / peak expiratory flow rate  |
| Plt          | Platelets  |
| PM           | Post mortem examination  |
| PMB          | Post Menopausal Bleeding   |
| PMH also PHx | Previous Medical History   |
| PMR          | Polymyalgia Rheumatica   |
| PND          | Paroxysmal Nocturnal Dyspnoea  |
| PO           | Per Orim (by mouth)  |
| POP          | Progesterone Only Pill   |
| PR           | Per Rectum   |
| PRN          | As Required  |
| PSC          | Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis   |
| PTCA         | Percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty   |
| PTSD         | Post Traumatic Stress Disorder   |
| PU           | Peptic Ulcer OR Passed urine   |
| PRV          | Polycythaemia Rubra Vera   |
| PV           | Per Vagina   |
| (PVD)        | Peripheral Vascular Disease (peripheral arterial disease preferred)  |
| qds (or) qid | Four times a day   |
| QEH          | Queen Elizabeth Hospital   |
| Resp / RR    | Respiration (Rate)   |
| RA           | Rheumatoid Arthritis   |
| RBBB         | Right Bundle Branch Block  |
| RCA          | Right Coronary Artery (of the heart)   |
| RDS          | Respiratory Distress Syndrome  |
| RIF          | Right Iliac Fossa  |
| RIH          | Right Inguinal Hernia  |
| R/LIF        | Right/Left Iliacfossa  |
| RS           | Respiratory System   |
| RSI          | Repetitive Strain Injury   |
| (RTA)        | Road Traffic Accident (write renal tubular acidosis in full) Note that whilst Road traffic accident is in common use, RTC is the preferred term. |
| RTC          | Road Traffic Crash   |
| RUQ          | Right Upper Quadrant   |
| RVI          | Royal Victoria Infirmary   |
| Rx           | Prescription or Treatment  |
| SBG          | Serum Blood Glucose  |
| SLR          | Straight Leg Raising   |
| SMR          | Submucosal Resection   |
| SOB          | Short of Breath  |

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| SR              | Sinus rhythm  |
| SRH             | Sunderland Royal Hospital   |
| Stat            | Immediately   |
| STD             | Sexually Transmitted Disease  |
| STEMI           | ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction                                      |
| STI             | Sexually Transmitted Infection  |
| SVD             | Spontaneous Vertex Delivery   |
| Sx              | Symptoms  |
| SkXR            | Skull X-ray   |
| T               | Temperature   |
| TAH ± BSO       | Total Abdominal Hysterectomy ± Bilateral Salpingo-oophorectomy          |
| TATT            | Tired all the Time  |
| TB              | Tuberculosis  |
| TCI             | To come in-date or fact that a person is due to be admitted to hospital |
| tds (or) tid    | Three Times a Day   |
| TFTs            | Thyroid Function Test   |
| THR             | Total Hip Replacement   |
| TIA             | Transient Ischaemic Attack  |
| TKR             | Total Knee Replacement  |
| TM              | Tympanic Membrane   |
| TOP (MTOP/STOP) | Termination of pregnancy (Medical ~ / Surgical~)                        |
| TShR            | Total Shoulder Replacement  |
| TURP/T          | Transurethral resection of Prostate / (Bladder) Tumour                  |
| UC              | Ulcerative Colitis  |
| U&Es            | Urea and Electrolytes   |
| UHND            | University Hospital of North Durham                                     |
| USS             | Ultra Sound Scan  |
| UTI             | Urinary Tract Infection   |
| VF              | Ventricular Fibrillation  |
| VSD             | Ventricular Septal Defect   |
| VT              | Ventricular Tachycardia   |
| VTE             | Venous Thromboembolism  |
| wbc             | White Blood Cell Count  |
| Wd              | Ward  |
| Wt              | Weight  |

#### NON-PREFERRED ABBREVIATION LIST

|    |  |
|----|--|
| #  | <i>Fracture. May be written on hand written discharge letters. However, should not be used in electronic correspondence. (Depending on settings may display either as # or as £)</i> |
| AR | <i>Ambiguous: could refer to Aortic Regurgitation or Aortic valve replacement. Write in full</i>   |



|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| AS             | <i>Ambiguous: could refer to Abdominal System or Aortic Stenosis. Write in full</i>  |
| BS             | <i>Ambiguous: could refer to Bowel sounds or breath sounds. Write in full.</i>   |
| Ca             | <i>Ambiguous: could refer to Carcinoma or calcium. Write in full</i>   |
| CCF / CHF / HF | <i>Congestive cardiac (heart) failure. Use of more precise LVSD / LVDD is preferred. If diagnosis uncertain, CCF may be used.</i>  |
| Cx             | <i>Ambiguous: could refer to cervix, cervical spine or circumflex artery. Write in full</i>  |
| ED             | <i>Ambiguous: could refer to Erectile Dysfunction or Emergency Department. Write in full</i>   |
| ET             | <i>Ambiguous: could refer to Endotracheal (tube) or Essential Thrombocytopaenia. Write in full</i>   |
| GU             | <i>Ambiguous: could refer to Genito-urinary or Gastric ulcer. Write in full</i>  |
| MI             | <i>Ambiguous: could refer to Mitral incompetence or Myocardial infarction. However, MI in regular use by all specialities, so may be used for Myocardial Infarction. Ideally write in full or use STEMI or NSTEMI, and write Mitral Incompetence</i> |
| MS             | <i>Ambiguous: could refer to Multiple Sclerosis or Mitral Stenosis. However, MS is widely used by public for Multiple Sclerosis. Therefore, accepted for use as multiple sclerosis. Mitral stenosis should be written in full.</i>                   |
| PID            | <i>Ambiguous. Could refer to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease OR Prolapsed Intervertebral Disc. Write in full</i>   |
| RFT            | <i>Ambiguous could refer to Renal (Kidney) Function tests OR Respiratory Function tests. Write in full</i>   |
| R / L          | <i>Right and left should be written in full</i>  |
| STI            | <i>Ambiguous: could refer to soft tissue injury OR sexually transmitted illness. Use NBI for non-bony injury and STD for sexually transmitted disease.</i>   |
| VE             | <i>Ambiguous: could refer to vaginal examination or ventricular ectopic. Should be written in full in all correspondence.</i>  |

## **CANCER REGIMES**

It is accepted that cancer regimes are cumbersome to write in full. Whilst a standard for understanding the nomenclature exists (maintained by TRUD), it is meaningless to anyone not involved in the delivery of cancer care.

Therefore, it is recommended that where regimes are added to correspondence, it is made clear that the abbreviation is a chemotherapy regime.

## **UNITS OF MEASURE**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| km / m / cm / mm         | kilometre / metre / centimetre / millimetre                  |
| kg / g / mg / microg /pg | Kilogramme / gramme / milligramme / microgramme / picogramme |
|                          | <i>note: µg or mcg are not approved</i>                      |
| L / mL / microL / pL     | Litre / millilitre / microlitre / picolitre                  |
|                          | <i>Note: µL is not approved</i>                              |

mmHg for measurement of blood pressure  
units international units. Do not write iu.

Except to record what patients have reported, imperial measurements should not be used:

ft / in / st / lb / oz Feet / inches / stones / pounds / ounces  
*note: 'miles' should be written in full*

### **COMMENT ON DATE / TIME FORMATS**

Ideally time should be written in a 24 hour format with colon's separating the units. Hours and minutes must always been included; seconds may be excluded where not required. If time is written in a 12 hour format, AM or PM must also be included.

Eg: 14:25 or 14:25:02 Less preferred: 2:25PM

Overnight on days the clock changes, 24 hour format must be used with either BST or GMT appended to avoid ambiguity

Eg 02:25GMT or 03:15BST

Date should be written in the format of day/month/year; the year in 4 digit format:

Eg 20 February 2014 or 20/02/2014

Acknowledgements: the abbreviations list is based in part on the RCGP abbreviation list. However, variations have been made to reflect local use (both to remove and add abbreviations.)

### **Preferred Abbreviation List**

Date of Publication: 17 June 2018  
Version: 5.0  
Author: Dr Jonathan Harness  
Review Due: 17 June 2020

### **Version Control**

#### **Release 5 – 17 June 2018**

Reviewed applicability of current abbreviations  
Added version control to page footers.  
Amendments

- ADRT – Advanced Decision to Refuse Treatment Added

#### **Release 4 – 27 February 2014**

Amendments:

- PMB – corrected to Post menopausal bleeding
- ERPC added
- PEG added
- UHND added

- MDT added
- ECC, ACC and EAU added (for Gateshead)
- ALL, AML, HL/NHL, MDS, MPD, MDS, ITP PVR Added
- DXT removed – not commonly used
- ET added to ambiguous list

### Release 3

#### Amendments

- TAH ± BSO added
- NVD Added
- PVD bracketed – Peripheral arterial disease preferred term
- Fracture. May be written on hand written discharge letters. However, should not be used in ["EMIS" changed to "electronic correspondence"]. (Depending on settings may display either as # or as £)

Rejected requests for addition: LAVH (laparoscopically assisted vaginal hysterectomy); VH (vaginal hysterectomy); TVT (Tension Free Vaginal Tape); TLH (Total laparoscopic hysterectomy); TLRH (total laparoscopic radical hysterectomy)

### Release 2

#### Amendments [v2.1]

- PMR added

#### Amendments [v2.0]

- IBD & IBS – corrected
- Cx removed and added to non-preferred list since ambiguous
- PBS added
- AFP added
- EMG added
- MRCP added
- ERCP added
- VSD added
- LBBB / RBBB added
- PCI added
- GTN added
- Comment regarding date / time format added
- O2 added
- HAV, HBV, HCV, HDV, HEV added
- LAD and RCA added

#### Rejected requests for addition:

- CRT-P, CRT-D (CARDIAC RESYNCHRONISATION THERAPY- PACING, DEFIBRILLATOR),
- LVIDS, LVIDD, IVS, RA/LA, IAS, PAP, PASP, TAPSE, NSVT, RVOT, PFO, TGA
- NCS (nerve conduction studies)

It is recognised that these abbreviations are probably in common use within the speciality, it was felt would not be commonly recognised outside; therefore, for correspondence, these should be written in full.

### Release 1 – 13 February 2013

Amendments [v1.2] (following consultation with GPs and QEH):

- AS removed felt to be too ambiguous
- MCL removed felt not to be in common use
- mmHG changed to mmHg
- Ca removed felt to be too ambiguous
- Cr added
- Na+ added
- K+ added
- Plt added
- VTE added
- AoR removed: felt to be too ambiguous
- AMI changed to MI

Amendments [v1.4]:

- IOP Intraocular pressure added

Amendments [v1.5]

- Front page added, amendment to introduction

Amendments [v1.6]

- RTC added and note added to RTA that RTC is preferred term
- ED added to non-preferred list since ambiguous
- SRI amended to SRH
- CTG added
- TOP amended with MTOP and STOP qualifiers
- IBD added

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