

Date: 10 July 2023



Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia

PRESCRIBING POLICY HOSPITAL QUEEN ELIZABETH II

PHARMACY DEPARTMENT

HOSPITAL QUEEN ELIZABETH II

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10 JULY 2023



PRESCRIBING POLICY
PHARMACY DEPARTMENT,
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REVISION		

**REVISION
PRESCRIBING POLICY HQE II, PHARMACY DEPARTMENT, HQE II**


NO.	DATE OF REVISION	DOCUMENT NAME	REVIEW DATE (3 YEARS OR WHEN REQUIRED)
1	20 August 2018	Prescribing Policy Hospital Queen Elizabeth II Kota Kinabalu Sabah	When required
2	10 July 2023	Prescribing Policy Hospital Queen Elizabeth II	09 July 2026



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	INTRODUCTION, OBJECTIVES & SCOPE OF SERVICE	

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A. INTRODUCTION


Patient medication safety is essential in all healthcare organizations, especially in tertiary hospitals which involving complicated medical therapy. One of the factors contributing to medication error that has been well known is inappropriate use of abbreviations in medication order (prescription). Incidence of medication errors due to abbreviations and non-standard nomenclature in Malaysia is about 95% according to a medical records review conducted by Zaiton *et al* in Institute for Health Systems Research. The misinterpretation of an abbreviation might potentially endanger patients by supplying different medication orders. We hope to reduce the occurrence of preventable errors by having this prescribing policy as a reference for both prescribers and other healthcare professionals when giving medication orders, and during medication preparation and administration.

B. OBJECTIVES

1. To create and promote awareness of good prescribing practice among healthcare providers.
2. To minimize medication error secondary to prescribing error in handwritten prescriptions.
3. To establish a guide and training tool on good prescribing practice for handwritten prescriptions.

C. SCOPE OF SERVICE

All handwritten prescriptions or medication orders for inpatient and outpatient setting in Hospital Queen Elizabeth II.

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D. GOOD PRESCRIBING PRINCIPLES

1. DETAILS PERTAINING TO MEDICINES

1.1 DRUG

1.1.1 All prescriptions must be written **CLEARLY, LEGIBLY, INDELIBLY** and **ATTRIBUTABLE**.

1.1.2 Prescribe drugs according to the **category of prescriber** authorized to initiate the prescription for the medicine as listed below;

(Certain prescription policies may govern the use of certain drugs)

A* :Consultant/Specialists for specific indications only

A :Consultant/Specialists

A/KK :Consultant/Specialists/Family Physician Specialists

B :Consultant/Specialists/Family Physician Specialists/Medical Officers

C :Consultant/Specialists/Family Physician Specialists/Medical Officers

C+ :Consultant/Specialists/Family Physician Specialists/Medical Officers

1.1.3 Write drug names in full. **DO NOT** use **abbreviations**. Exception may be made for approved drug name abbreviations.

Refer to Appendix 1 – List of Acceptable Drug Name Abbreviations

1.1.4 **DO NOT** use **chemical names or symbols**. e.g. HCl (hydrochloric acid or hydrochloride) may be mistaken for KCl (potassium chloride). Exception may be made for approved drug name abbreviations.

Refer to Appendix 1 – List of Acceptable Drug Name Abbreviations



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1.1.5 Use **generic drug names**. Exception may be made for a) combination products and approved brand names, b) drugs where significant bioavailability issues exist and c) unless otherwise specified, an equivalent generic brand will be dispensed for any medication ordered by brand name.

Refer to Appendix 2 – List of Acceptable Brand Names

1.1.6 Where **different formulations/strengths/devices** of a medication are available, it is important that details are clearly stated on the prescription. e.g. Actrapid penfill or Actrapid vial, MDI Budesonide or Turbuhaler Budesonide.

1.2 DOSE

1.2.1 **DO NOT** use **trailing zeroes** e.g. use 5mg instead of 5.0mg. A leading zero should be use in front of a decimal point for a dose less than 1 e.g. use 0.5mg instead of .5mg.

1.2.2 Use **words** or **Hindu-Arabic** numbers e.g. one, two, three or 1,2,3 etc. **DO NOT** use Roman Numerals e.g. II for two, III for three etc.

1.2.3 Where fractions need to be used, circle the dose to denote clearly e.g. '½ tab' could be interpreted as 'half' or as 'one to two' tablets. Therefore, write if the intended meaning is 'half a tablet'.

1.2.4 For figures **above 100**, use **a)** words to express intent e.g. one thousand, one million etc and **b)** commas for dosing units at or above 1,000 e.g. Syr. Nystatin 100,000 units QID.

1.2.5 For **insulin**, prescribe as '**units**' in full with a space in between numbers and dose e.g. 12 units. **DO NOT** abbreviate as this is often associated with ten-fold errors e.g. 'U' or 'Ü' can be mistaken for number '0'. For multiple dose insulin, write as S/C Actrapid Penfill 12 Units am, 10 units noon and 13 units pm.



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1.2.6 For **combination** drugs, specify a) **strength** and b) **quantity of tablets per dose** e.g. Tab. Exforge (10mg/160mg) 1 tab OD.

1.2.7 For **inhalers**, prescribe as number of doses **NOT puffs** (unless a combination inhaler is involved). E.g. MDI Budesonide 200mcg BD and Acc Seretide (50mcg/250mcg) 1 puff BD.

1.2.8 For **psychotropic drugs**, prescribe as number of doses **NOT** number of tablets e.g. Tab. Clonazepam 1mg ON/PRN x 7 doses.

1.3 DOSE UNITS

1.3.1 The term millilitre is abbreviated as mL or ml, **NOT** cc or cm³

1.4 DIAGNOSIS


1.4.1 **Avoid acronyms** or **abbreviations** for medical terms (diagnosis) and procedure names on orders or prescriptions.

Refer to Hospital Queen Elizabeth II List of Medical Abbreviations

1.5 FREQUENCY

1.5.1 Frequency **MUST** always be specified, even for 'as required' medications. Where appropriate, state the quantity of drug to be given e.g. Tab. Paracetamol 1g TDS/PRN x 10 tablets.

1.5.2 Express dosage frequency unambiguously e.g. use 'two times a week' instead of 'biweekly' as the latter could be confused as 'every two weeks'. For drugs to be administered only on specific days of the week, then those days must always be written in full e.g. S/C Erythropoietin Beta 2,000 units 3x/week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

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1.6 DURATION

1.6.1 Duration should be written clearly on the prescription. If possible, for long term prescriptions (chronic illnesses), the appointment date (TCA) for the patient to visit the facility again can be written on the TOP RIGHT of the prescription so that both patient and pharmacist are left with no ambiguity as to the quantity to be consumed/dispensed. For short term /PRN usage, the number of tablets to be given should be written e.g. Tab. Paracetamol 1g TDS/PRN x 10 tablets – to deter patients from using more or less of the medicine.

2. DETAILS PERTAINING TO PATIENT'S DATA

2.1 PATIENT'S DATA


- 2.1.1 One prescription is for **one patient**
- 2.1.2 Patient's **full name, full I.C number** (12 digits) or Hospital RN must be stated on all prescriptions for proper identification of a patient, their age and gender. (Age must be stated on all prescriptions).
- 2.1.3 **AGE** an **WEIGHT** must be stated on all Paediatric prescriptions.

2.2 DATE

- 2.2.1 The **DATE** when the prescription is written must be stated.

3. DETAILS PERTAINING TO PRESCRIBER

Prescriber's **signature and name stamp with MMC**, department and hospital must be provided.

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4. VERBAL ORDER

4.1 TO PHARMACY

4.1.1 Verbal order is **NOT ACCEPTABLE** at all times for the supply of drugs.

4.2 IN THE WARDS/UNITS/EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

4.2.1 Verbal orders may be given under emergency circumstances, and **PROVIDED** that a written prescription or medication chart follows within **6 hours from order received**.

5. DRUG CHART / PRESCRIPTION

5.1 CHANGES OF ROUTE/DRUG/DOSE/FREQUENCY

5.1.1 Any changes to be made related to this, prescriber need to **strikethrough** and **initial** with the **date** in which the changes were made (outpatient prescription).

5.1.2 For in-ward prescription (medication chart), prescriber need to **re-endorse** in new medication chart.



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E. ERROR PRONE ABBREVIATIONS, SYMBOLS AND DOSE DESIGNATION

One of the major causes of medication errors is the ongoing use of potentially dangerous abbreviations and dose expressions. The abbreviations, symbols and dose designations found in this table have been reported as being frequently **misinterpreted** and involved in harmful medication errors. They should never be used when communicating medical information. This includes internal communications, telephone or verbal prescriptions, computer-generated labels, labels for drug storage bins, medication administration records, as well as pharmacy and prescriber computer order entry screens.

TABLE 1: EXAMPLES OF FREQUENTLY MISINTERPRETED ABBREVIATIONS, SYMBOLS AND DOSE DESIGNATION

Abbreviations	Intended Meaning	Misinterpretation	Correction
µg	Microgram	Mistaken as 'mg'	Use 'mcg' or 'microgram'
cc	Cubic centimeters	Mistaken as 'u' (units).	Use 'mL or ml'
IJ	Injection	Mistaken as 'IV' or 'intrajugular'.	Use 'Inj'
IU	International unit	Mistaken as 'IV' (intravenous) or '10' (ten).	Use 'units'
U or ü	Unit	Mistaken as the number '0' or number '4', causing a 10-fold overdose or greater. e.g. 4U seen as '40' or 4ü seen as '44'. Mistaken as 'cc' causing the dose to be dispense in volume instead of units. e.g. 4u seen as 4cc	Use 'units'
biweekly	Two possible meanings, i.e. 'two times a week' or 'every two weeks'		Use '2x/ week' or 'every two weeks'




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TABLE 1: EXAMPLES OF FREQUENTLY MISINTERPRETED ABBREVIATIONS, SYMBOLS AND DOSE DESIGNATION

Abbreviations	Intended Meaning	Misinterpretation	Correction
X (10)	Two possible meanings, i.e. '10 doses' or '10 tablets'	e.g. "T. Clonazepam 1mg ON x (10) "can be interpreted as '10 tablets' or '10 doses'. Note: T. Clonazepam currently comes in 2mg strength.	Prescribe as number of doses. e.g. T. Clonazepam 1mg ON x (10 doses)
1/2	Half	Mistaken as 'one or two'.	Use ½ and circle it, 
I/I, II/II, III/III e.g. Cap. Cloxacillin II/II QID	One, two, three	Availability of drug dosage depends on product purchased. A capsule of Cloxacillin could be 250mg or 500mg.	Use usual dose in numbers. e.g. Cap. Cloxacillin 250mg QID
Trailing zero after decimal point, e.g. 1.0mg	1 mg	Mistaken as 10mg if the decimal point is not seen.	DO NOT use trailing zeros for doses expressed in whole numbers. Write '1mg' instead of '1.0mg'
"Naked" decimal point, e.g. .5mg	0.5 mg	Mistaken as 5mg if the decimal point is not seen.	Write '0.5 mg' instead of '.5mg'
Drug name and dose written closely (especially problematic for drug names that end with letter 'l' e.g. Metoprolol50mg; Atenolol50mg)	Metoprolol 50mg Atenolol 50mg	Mistaken as Metoprolol 150mg Mistaken as Atenolol 150mg	Place adequate space between the drug name, dose and unit of measure.

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F. ACCEPTABLE TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS


Abbreviations should be avoided at all if possible, but in the event of abbreviations being utilised, only those approved and contained within this document are permitted to be used within Hospital Queen Elizabeth II.

1. DRUG NAME

- 1.1 Drug names must always be written in **full generic names**.
- 1.2 It may sometimes be appropriate to use brand name (innovator drug) to avoid confusion such as in:
 - Insulins
 - Combination products
 - Multi-ingredient preparations
 - Overly long and complicated drug names
- 1.3 Drug names must **NEVER be abbreviated** under any circumstances. **Exceptions** is for modified release products – slow release, controlled release, continuous release or other modified release products, the description used in brand name to denote the release characteristics should be included with the generic drug name, for example Tramadol SR, Carbamazepine CR.
Refer to Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

2. PRESCRIBING TERM

- 2.1 Write in full – avoid using abbreviations wherever possible, including Latin abbreviations.
- 2.2 Abbreviations used should be commonly used, understood and universal.
- 2.3 Do not use symbols.
Refer to Appendix 3 – List of Acceptable Terms or Abbreviations and Hospital Queen Elizabeth II List of Abbreviations.

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No.	Generic Names	Acceptable Drug Name Abbreviations
1.	Factor IX, II and X in combination 500IU/vial Injection (3-Factor Unactivated Prothrombin Complex Concentrate)	<i>PCC</i>
2.	Artificial Tears Preservative Free	<i>ATPF</i>
3.	Ascorbic Acid	<i>Vit C</i>
4.	Chloramphenicol	<i>CMC</i>
5.	Ferric Ammonium Citrate	<i>FAC</i>
6.	Glyceryl Trinitrate	<i>GTN</i>
7.	Magnesium Trisilicate Mixture	<i>MMT</i>
8.	Methyl Salicylate Ointment	<i>LMS</i>
9.	Oral Rehydration Salt	<i>ORS</i>
10.	Paracetamol	<i>PCM</i>
11.	Paste Bismuth Subnitrate, Iodoform and Liquid Paraffin	<i>BIPP</i>
12.	Potassium Chloride	<i>KCl</i>
13.	Potassium Dihydrogen Phosphate Injection	<i>KH₂PO₄</i>
14.	Potassium Permanganate	<i>KMnO₄</i>
15.	Silver Sulfadiazine Cream	<i>SSD Cream</i>
16.	Sodium Chloride	<i>NaCl</i>
17.	Sodium Dihydrogen Orthophosphate Anhydrous	<i>NaH₂PO₄</i>
18.	Vitamin B Complex	<i>Vit B Co</i>




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APPENDIX 2 – LIST OF ACCEPTABLE BRAND NAMES


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No.	Generic Names	Acceptable Brand Names
1.	Acetylsalicylic Acid 100mg and Glycine 45mg Tablet	<i>Cardiprin</i>
2.	Acriflavine 0.1% Lotion	<i>Flavine</i>
3.	Alendronate Sodium 70mg and Cholecalciferol 5600 IU Tablet	<i>Fosamax Plus</i>
4.	Amiloride HCl 5mg and Hydrochlorothiazide 50mg Tablet	<i>Moduretic</i>
5.	Amlodipine 10mg and Valsartan 160mg Tablet	<i>Exforge</i>
6.	Amorolfine 5% Nail Lacquer	<i>Loceryl</i>
7.	Amoxicillin and Clavulanate Tablet / Injection / Syrup	<i>Augmentin</i>
8.	Ampicillin and Sulbactam Tablet / Injection / Syrup	<i>Unasyn</i>
9.	Antilymphocyte / Antithymocyte Immunoglobulin (from horse) Injection	<i>Atgam</i>
10.	Antithymocyte Immunoglobulin (from rabbit) Injection	<i>Thymoglobulin</i>
11.	Artemether 20mg and Lumefantrine 120mg Tablet	<i>Riamet</i>
12.	Benzalkonium 0.01% Cream	<i>Drapolene</i>
13.	Betamethasone 17-valerate Cream / Ointment	<i>Betnovate Cream / Oint</i>
14.	Bismuth Subgallate and Benzyl Benzoate Suppository	<i>Anusol</i>
15.	Budesonide 160mcg and Formoterol 4.5mcg Inhalation	<i>Symbicort</i>
16.	Calcipotriol Hydrate 50mcg/g and Betamethasone Dipropionate 0.5 mg/g Ointment	<i>Daivobet</i>
17.	Cefoperazone Sodium 500mg and Sulbactam Sodium 500mg Injection	<i>Sulperazone</i>
18.	Chlorpheniramine Maleate Tablet / Injection	<i>Piriton</i>
19.	Choline Salicylate 8.7% and Cetylkonium Chloride 0.01% Dental Gel	<i>Bonjela</i>
20.	Clostridium Botulinum Toxin Type A 100 units	<i>Botox</i>
21.	Coal Tar, Salicylic Acid and Pinetar Liquid	<i>Sebitar</i>
22.	Dexamethasone and Neomycin Sulphate and Polymyxin B Eye Ointment	<i>Maxitrol</i>
23.	Dexamethasone Sodium Phosphate 0.1% Eye Drops	<i>Maxidex</i>
24.	Diosmin 450mg and Hesperidin 50mg Tablet	<i>Daflon</i>
25.	Diphenhydramine 14mg/ 5ml and Ammonium Chloride 135mg/ 5ml Expectorant Syrup	<i>Benadryl</i>
26.	Diphenoxylate with Atropine Sulphate Tablet	<i>Lomotil</i>
27.	Dorzolamide HCl 2% Ophthalmic Solution	<i>Trusopt</i>
28.	Erythropoietin Human Recombinant Injection (alfa)	<i>Eprex</i>

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29.	Erythropoietin Human Recombinant Injection (beta)	<i>Recormon</i>
30.	Essential Phospholipids Capsule	<i>Essentiale</i>
31.	Estradiol Valerate 2mg and Norgestrel 0.5mg Tablet	<i>Progyluton</i>
32.	Ezetimibe 10mg and Simvastatin 20mg Tablet	<i>Vytorin</i>
33.	Factor IX, II, VII and X Injection (4-Factor Unactivated Prothrombin Complex Concentrate)	<i>Octaplex</i>
34.	Factor VIIa (Recombinant) Eptacog Alfa (activated) 100 KIU (2 mg) Injection	<i>Novoseven 2mg</i>
35.	Factor VIIa (Recombinant) Eptacog Alfa (activated) 50 KIU (1 mg) Injection	<i>Novoseven 1mg</i>
36.	Framycetin Sulphate 0.5%, Dexamethasone 0.05% and Gramicidin 0.005% Ear Drops	<i>Sofradex</i>
37.	Gamma Benzene Hexachloride 0.1 % Lotion	<i>Lindane</i>
38.	Glycerin 25% and Sodium Chloride 15% Enema	<i>Ravin enema</i>
39.	Hypromellose 0.3% Eye Drops	<i>Artificial tears</i>
40.	Hypromellose 0.3%, Carbomer 980 Ophthalmic Gel	<i>Genteal Gel</i>
41.	Imipenem 500mg and Cilastatin 500mg Injection	<i>Tienam</i>
42.	Insulin Aspart 30% and Protaminated Insulin Aspart 70% 100 U/ml Injection	<i>Novomix</i>
43.	Insulin Recombinant Neutral Human, short-acting 100 IU/ml Injection	<i>Actrapid / Insugen R</i>
44.	Insulin Recombinant Synthetic Human, intermediate acting 100 IU/ml Injection	<i>Insulatard / Insugen N</i>
45.	Insulin Recombinant Synthetic Human, pre-mixed 100 IU/ml Injection	<i>Mixtard, Insugen 30/70</i>
46.	Ipratropium Bromide and Salbutamol MDI / Inhalation Solution	<i>Combivent</i>
47.	Ipratropium Bromide MDI / Inhalation Solution	<i>Atrovent</i>
48.	Isosorbide-5-Mononitrate 30mg or 60mg SR Tablet	<i>Imdur SR</i>
49.	Isosorbide Dinitrate Tablet	<i>Isordil</i>
50.	Levodopa 100mg and Benserazide 25mg HBS Capsule	<i>Madopar HBS</i>
51.	Levodopa 100mg and Carbidopa 25mg Tablet	<i>Sinemet</i>
52.	Levodopa 200mg and Benserazide 50mg Tablet	<i>Madopar</i>

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53.	Lopinavir 200mg and Ritonavir 50mg Tablet	<i>Kaletra</i>
54.	Loratadine 5mg and Pseudoephedrine Sulphate 120mg Tablet	<i>Clarinase</i>
55.	Losartan and Hydrochlorothiazide Tablet	<i>Hyzaar</i>
56.	Modified Fluid Gelatin 4% Injection	<i>Gelafundin</i>
57.	Oxytocin 5 units and Ergometrine Maleate 0.5mg/ml Injection	<i>Syntometrine</i>
58.	Paradichlorobenzene, Turpentine Oil and Chlorbutol Ear Drios	<i>Cerumol</i>
59.	Phenoxyethyl Penicillin 125mg Tablet	<i>Penicillin V</i>
60.	Piperacillin 4g and Tazobactam 500mg Injection	<i>Tazocin</i>
61.	Polyethylene Glycol/Macrogol 4000 Powder	<i>Fortrans</i>
62.	Potassium Chloride 600mg SR Tablet	<i>Slow K</i>
63.	Protein Free Haemodialysate 10% Jelly	<i>Solcoseryl</i>
64.	Rifampicin 150mg, Isoniazid 75mg, Pyrazinamide 400mg and Ethambutol HCL 275mg Tablet	<i>Akurit-4</i>
65.	Salmeterol and Fluticasone Propionate Evohaler/Accuhaler (25/50, 25/125, 50/250, 50/500) mcg	<i>Seretide (strength)</i>
66.	Sodium Biphosphate 16% and Sodium Phosphate 6% Solution	<i>Fleet enema</i>
67.	Sulfadoxine 500mg and Pyrimethamine 25mg Tablet	<i>Fansidar</i>
68.	Sulphamethoxazole 400mg and Trimethoprim 80mg	<i>Bactrim</i>
69.	Synthetic ACTH (Tetracosactrin Acetate) 250mcg Injection	<i>Synacthen</i>
70.	Tar, Coal Tar and Oleyl Alcohol Liquid	<i>Polytar</i>
71.	Telmisartan 80mg and Hydrochlorothiazide 12.5mg Tablet	<i>Micardis Plus</i>
72.	Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate 300mg and Entricitabine 200mg Tablet	<i>Tenvir-Em</i>
73.	Tripolidine HCl 2.5mg and Pseudoephedrine HCL 60mg Tablet	<i>Actifed</i>
74.	Vitamin B1, B6 and B12	<i>Neurobion</i>
75.	Zidovudine 300mg and Lamivudine 150mg Tablet	<i>Combivir</i>




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APPENDIX 3 – LIST OF ACCEPTABLE TERMS OR ABBREVIATIONS


APPENDIX 3: a) Frequency or Timing

Intended Meaning	Acceptable Terms or Abbreviations
(in the) morning	OM
(at) night	ON
Once daily	OD
Twice a day	BD
Three times a day	TDS
Four times a day	QID
Every 4 hours	Every 4 hrs / 4 hourly / 4 hrly / q4h
Every 6 hours	Every 6 hrs / 6 hourly / 6 hrly / q6h
Every other day	EOD
Hourly	Hrly
Once a week	1x /week
Three time a week	3x /week
When required	PRN
Immediately	Stat

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APPENDIX 3: b) Route of Administration

Intended Meaning	Acceptable Terms or Abbreviations
Intramuscular	IM
Intravenous	IV
Left	Ⓛ
Nebulised	Neb
Naso-gastric	NG
Oral	PO
Per vagina	PV
Per rectum	PR
Peripherally inserted central catheter	PICC
Right	Ⓡ
Subcutaneous	SC or S/C
Sublingual	S/L
Topical	LA
Inside cheek	Bucc
Intradermal	ID
Intranasal	IN
Intraperitoneal	IP
Intrathecal	IT
Infusion	Inf or inf

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APPENDIX 3: c) Units of Measure and Concentration

Intended Meaning	Acceptable Terms or Abbreviations
Gram(s)	G
International units	units
Kilogram(s)	kg
Litre(s)	L
Millilitre (s)	ml or mL
Milligram(s)	mg
Microgram(s)	mcg
Percentage	%
Millimole	mmol

APPENDIX 3: d) Dosage Forms

Intended Meaning	Acceptable Terms or Abbreviations
Ampule	Amp
Capsule	Cap.
Controlled release	CR
Eye drops	Gutt.
Eye ointment	Occ
Extended release	XR or ER
Immediate release	IR
Injection	Inj
Metered dose inhaler	MDI
Modified release	MR
Mixture	Mixt.
Ointment	Oint.
Suppository	Supp.
Syrup	Syr
Slow release	SR
Tablet	T. or Tab.
Patient controlled analgesia	PCA
Accuhaler	Acc
Soft Mist Inhaler	SMI
Mouthwash	M/W or m/w



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APPENDIX 3: e) For Warfarin Prescriptions

Monday	Signified as '1'
Tuesday	Signified as '2'
Wednesday	Signified as '3'
Thursday	Signified as '4'
Friday	Signified as '5'
Saturday	Signified as '6'
Sunday	Signified as '7'