



Abbreviations used in Prescribing

Abbreviation	Meaning
ac	before meals
alt die	alternate days
bid or bd	TWICE a day
BE	BOTH eyes
cc	Close control - see note 1 below or Section A of PHARMAC Schedule (when used as period of supply) Use with care as it also can mean take with food (when used as a dose instruction)
die	daily
EE	EACH eye
gutt / guttae	drop
nocte or on	at night
mane	in the morning
mitte	send/supply
o	each
d or die	daily
od	once daily
on	at night
OP	original pack
po	by mouth
pc	after meals
prn	as / when required
q3h/q4h	every THREE hours/every FOUR hours
qqh	every FOUR hours (or " up to every FOUR hours") - see note 2
qid or qds or qd	FOUR times a day - see note 3
qs	quantity sufficient
tid or tds	THREE times a day
cc	with meals (when used as an instruction)
sos	when necessary
mdu	as instructed
caps	capsules
tabs	tablets
mixt	mixture
linct	linctus
ung	ointment
gutt	drops
sig	follow these instructions
stat	immediately (often implies a single dose, though not always) See note 4
hss	at bedtime (literally at the hour of bedtime)



"Fractions" are sometimes used to express frequency or duration of treatment.

Example: $1/52$ = one week, $1/7$ = one day, $1/12$ = one month or 30 days

Check there is no ambiguity – if uncertain write the period of supply out in full

Note 1

Close control is a Pharmac Schedule policy that means dispensing of a prescription in quantities of less than 90 days. It is required to be written and signed in the prescriber's handwriting with a period of supply attached (e.g. cc $1/12$ is supply 30 days).

Note 2

The abbreviation q.h. is also understood by some to stand for "quaque hora" or every hour. Care is required in the interpretation of this abbreviation. This abbreviation is best avoided

Note 3

In the USA and some other countries q.d. is usually interpreted as meaning "once daily" rather than "four times daily". This is obviously a source of potential confusion so ensure your meaning is clear or write out in full.

Note 4

The word 'Stat' can also be used to refer to Pharmac policy with regard to the period of supply of a medicine in 'one lot'.

Note 5

Roman numerals are still commonly used in prescribing e.g. iv for 4, iii for 3

As with all abbreviations ensure that everyone who has to read and use the abbreviation understands your intention.

The prescriber has the responsibility if there is an error because their use of an abbreviation was not clear.