

There are many abbreviations and terms that veterinarians use on drug prescriptions. Veterinary technicians should be able to understand those abbreviations and convert them into drug labels or instructions that pet owners will understand. You should also be able to interpret such abbreviations to make up drugs or fluids as directed by a veterinarian. This PowerPage lists commonly used abbreviations used on veterinary prescriptions. The bolded terms are the most commonly used and are therefore the most important.

Abbreviations Describing Frequency of Administration

| Abbreviation | Meaning | From Latin (if applicable) | Example |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| EOD | Every other day | | Give 1 pill EOD |
| SID | Once daily | semil in die | Give 1 pill SID |
| BID | Twice daily | bis in die | Give 1 pill BID |
| TID | Three time daily | ter in die | Give 1 pill TID |
| QID | Four time daily | quater in die | Give 1 pill QID |
| PRN | As needed | pro re nata | Give 1 pill PRN for anxiety |
| qh | Every hour | quaque hora | Inject 1 ml qh |
| q4h | Every 4 hours | quaque 4 hora | Inject 1 ml q4h |
| q30min | Every 30 minutes | | Inject 1 ml q30min |
| Qd | Every day | quaque die | Give 1 pill qd |
| ad lib | Freely as wanted | ad libitum | Provide water ad lib |
| X | Times | | Give 1 pill 3X daily |
| h.s. | At bedtime | hora somni | Give 1 pill h.s. |

Abbreviations Describing Route of Administration:

| Abbreviation | Meaning | From Latin (if applicable) | Example |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|-------------------|
| PO | By mouth (orally) | Per os | Give 1 tab PO |
| SQ, SC, subc, subq | Subcutaneous(ly) | | Give 1 ml SQ |
| IM | Intramuscular(ly) | | Inject 1 ml IM |
| IV | Intravenous(ly) | | Inject 1 ml IV |
| IP | Intraperitoneal (into the abdominal cavity) | | Inject 20 ml IP |
| OD | Right eye | oculus dexter | Instill 1 drop OD |
| OS | Left eye | oculus sinister | Instill 1 drop OS |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| OU | Both eyes | oculus uterque | Instill 1 drop OU |
| AD | Right ear | aurio dextra | Apply small amount AD |
| AS (sometimes AL) | Left ear | aurio sinister (or laeva) | Apply small amount AS |
| AU | Both ears | aurio utrae | Apply small amount AU |
| ID | Intradermal | | Inject 0.2 ml ID |

Abbreviations Describing Quantity or Dose:

| Abbreviation | Unit of measure | Equivalent to |
|---------------------|---------------------|---|
| lb (or lbs) | Pound(s) | 16 oz |
| mg | Milligram | .001 gram |
| G | Gram | .001 kg |
| kg | Kilogram | 2.2 lb |
| U | Unit | Often short for international unit. |
| U (of blood) | Unit of blood | The quantity of blood (plus anticoagulant) collected from a blood donor. For blood components, this is the volume of that component that would be present in a unit of blood. Typically, the volume is 250 ml of whole blood for dogs and 50 ml for cats |
| IU (or UI) | International unit | Quantity varies for different drugs or vitamins. This is an agreed upon measure of the amount of a vitamin or drug causes a certain effect |
| gr | Grain | 64.7989 mg |
| mEq | Milliequivalent | One-thousandth of a molar equivalent of a chemical |
| mL | Milliliter | .001 liter |
| oz | Ounce | 1/16 of a pound (30 grams) |
| qs | Quantity sufficient | |
| tbsp. | Tablespoon | 15 ml |
| tsp | Teaspoon | 5 ml |
| dr | Dram (drachm) | 1/16 of an ounce (28.8 grams) A fluid dram is 1/8 of a fluid ounce |
| cc | Cubic centimeter | 1 ml |

Other Abbreviations:

| Abbreviation | Meaning |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Sig | Write on label |
| Stat | Immediately |
| Susp | Suspension |
| Tab | Tablet |
| Syr | Syrup |
| Cap | Capsule |
| Amp | Ampule |
| DAW | Dispense as written |