

University of Michigan Health System Medication Order Guidelines

In the interest of patient safety, the Medical Staff of the University of Michigan Health System has approved the specific medication order guidelines listed in the table below. These are consistent with published guidelines from leading patient safety organizations, including the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP). Additionally, the Joint Commission (TJC), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan mandate hospitals to develop practices that promote patient safety.

Order Requirements	Rationale
Prescriber's name / ID must be legible	Should order clarification be necessary, patient care is expedited if the prescriber can be easily identified
Write out the word "units" and "International units" never use "U" or "IU"	The abbreviation "U" can easily be misread as a zero causing a 10-fold error. "IU" can be mistaken as (IV) intravenous or 10 (ten) 5U insulin can look like 50 insulin
Write out subcutaneous ; never use SC, SQ, or sub q	Could be mistaken as SL for sublingual or "5 every"
Never use µg for micrograms mcg not µg	The symbol "µg" can be confused with mg if not clearly written 15 µg can look like 15 mg
Never use a zero after a decimal point 5 not 5.0	If the decimal is not read, a 10-fold error may occur 5.0 mg can look like 50 mg
Always use a zero before a decimal point 0.5 not .5	Once again, if the decimal is not read, a 10-fold error may occur .5 mg can look like 5 mg
Never use q.d or Q.D. for Daily or q.o.d. or Q.O.D. for every other day	Mistaken as q.i.d., especially if the period after the "q" or the tail of the "q" is misunderstood as an "l". Write out daily and every other day .
The following drugs should be written without abbreviations* chemotherapy drugs compazine, chlorpromazine hydrocortisone, hydrochlorothiazide morphine	Per the approved Chemotherapy Policy (http://ummcpharmweb.med.umich.edu/policies/medication_use/chemotherapy.asp) CPZ abbreviation can be interpreted as either drug HCT or HCTZ abbreviations can be interpreted as either drug MSO4 abbreviation can be interpreted as MgSO4

* The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) lists abbreviations for these drugs as dangerous.

What You Can Do To Help Prevent Medication Errors

By following the examples above, you will help your patients to obtain the medication and dose that you intended. Further, eliminating known error-producing prescribing habits will save you time because it will reduce the need to page you for order clarification or for you to evaluate the patient if an error occurs.

All healthcare professionals want the very best care for their patients. When it comes to medication prescribing you can reduce the chance of an error occurring by following these guidelines.

Our goal is **100%** compliance. Thank you for taking a leadership role in patient safety.

Patient Safety = Prescriber Safety

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