



[Home](#) → [Understanding Medical Words: A Tutorial](#) → [Appendix B: Some Common Abbreviations](#)

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/appendixb.html>

## Appendix B: Some Common Abbreviations

This is a list of some common abbreviations and acronyms.

Abbreviation	Stands for	More information
ABG	Arterial blood gases	You may have an ABG test to detect lung diseases.
ACE	Angiotensin converting enzyme	Drugs called ACE inhibitors are used to treat high blood pressure, heart failure, diabetes and kidney diseases.
ACL	Anterior cruciate ligament	Commonly injured part of the knee
ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	A behavior disorder
AFIB	Atrial fibrillation	A disturbance of the rhythm of the heart
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome	Infection caused by human immunodeficiency virus
ALP	Alkaline phosphatase	You may have a blood test for ALP to detect liver or bone disease.
ALS	Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.	Also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease
ALT	Alanine aminotransferase	You may have a blood test for ALP to detect liver disease.
AMD	Age-related macular degeneration	An eye problem
AMI	Acute myocardial infarction	Heart attack
AODM	Adult onset diabetes mellitus	Type 2 diabetes
AST	Aspartate aminotransferase	You may have a blood test for ALP to detect liver disease.
AVM	Arteriovenous malformation	A defect in the circulatory system.
BID	Twice a day	Your doctor may write this on your prescription.
BMI	Body mass index	A measure of how much you should weigh based on your height
BP	Blood pressure	The force of your blood pushing against the walls of your arteries
BPH	Benign prostatic hypertrophy	Enlargement of the prostate gland
BRCA	Breast Cancer Gene	People with the gene may be at increased risk for breast or ovarian cancer.
BUN	Blood urea nitrogen	You may have a blood test for BUN to detect kidney disease problems.
CA	Cancer OR Calcium	

CA-125	Cancer antigen 125	You may have a blood test for CA-125 A to measure cancer activity.
CABG	Coronary artery bypass graft	A type of heart surgery
CAD	Coronary artery disease	A common type of heart disease
CAT	Computerized axial tomography	A type of x-ray
CBC	Complete blood count	A blood test that measures many properties of the cells in your blood
CHD	Congenital heart disease	Heart disease you were born with
CHF	Congestive heart failure	Also called heart failure. A condition in which the heart can't pump enough blood throughout the body.
CMV	Cytomegalovirus	A common virus
CNS	Central nervous system	The brain and spinal cord
COPD	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	A lung disease that makes it hard to breathe
CPK	Creatine phosphokinase	You may have a blood test for CPK to see if you've had a heart attack.
CPR	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation	An emergency procedure whose heart has stopper or is no longer breathing
CRF	Chronic renal failure	Failure of the kidneys
CRP	C-reactive protein	You may have a blood test for CRP to see if you have inflammation or heart problems.
CSF	Cerebrospinal fluid	A fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord
CVA	Cerebrovascular accident	A stroke or "brain attack"
CXR	Chest x-ray	A diagnostic test that uses radiation to make images of your lungs
D&C	Dilatation and curettage	A surgical procedure on the uterus (womb)
DJD	Degenerative joint disease	Another name for arthritis
DM	Diabetes mellitus	
DTP	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis	A vaccine for three diseases
DVT	Deep-vein thrombosis	A blood clot
DX	Diagnosis	
ECG, EKG	Electrocardiogram	A test that measures electrical impulses of the heart
ECHO	Echocardiogram	A test that uses sound waves to look at the heart
EEG	Electroencephalogram	A test that measures electrical impulses of the brain
EMG	Electromyography	A test that measures electrical impulses of muscles
ENT	Ear, nose and throat	
ERCP	Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography	A way to diagnose problems in the liver, gallbladder, bile ducts and pancreas
ESR	Erythrocyte sedimentation rate	A blood test for inflammation
ESRD	End-stage renal (kidney) disease	
FSH	Follicle stimulating hormone	If you are a woman, you may have a blood test for FSH to evaluate fertility.
GERD	Gastroesophageal reflux disease	A problem that happens when stomach contents leak back into your gullet
GI	Gastrointestinal	Another term for your digestive system

GFR	Glomerular filtration rate	A test of kidney damage
GU	Genitourinary	The urinary and sex organs
HAV	Hepatitis A virus	A virus that causes one type of liver disease
HBV	Hepatitis B virus	A virus that causes one type of liver disease
HCT	Hematocrit	A blood test measurement
HCV	Hepatitis C virus	A virus that causes one type of liver disease
HDL	High density lipoprotein	A type of cholesterol, also known as "good" cholesterol
HGB	Hemoglobin	A blood test measurement
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus	The virus that causes AIDS
HPV	Human papilloma virus	A virus that causes cervical cancer
HRT	Hormone replacement therapy	Hormones supplements that women may take
HTN	Hypertension	High blood pressure
IBD	Inflammatory bowel disease	A name for two digestive disorders-- ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease
IBS	Irritable bowel syndrome	A problem with the large intestine
ICD	Implantable cardioverter defibrillator	A device that monitors heart rhythm problems
ICU	Intensive care unit	Special hospital unit
IDDM	Insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus	Type 1 diabetes
IM	Intramuscular	A type of injection
IUD	Intrauterine device	A type of birth control for women
IV	Intravenous	A type of injection
IVP	Intravenous pyelogram	An x-ray test of the urinary system
LDL	Low density lipoprotein	A type of cholesterol, also known as "bad" cholesterol
LFT	Liver function tests	
MI	Myocardial infarction	Heart attack
MMR	Measles, mumps, and rubella	A vaccine for three diseases
MRI	Magnetic resonance imaging	A type of imaging test
MRSA	Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus	A type of infection
MS	Multiple sclerosis	A disease of the nervous system
NG	Nasogastric	You may need an NG tube to empty the contents of your stomach.
NIDDM	Non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus	Type 2 diabetes
NKDA	No known drug allergies	
NSAID	Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug	Drugs like ibuprofen
OCD	Obsessive-compulsive disorder	A type of anxiety disorder
PAD	Peripheral arterial disease	Diseases of the arteries outside the heart
PAP	Papanicolaou	You may need a PAP test to detect cervical cancer.
PAT	Paroxysmal atrial tachycardia	A disturbance of the rhythm of the heart
PET	Positron emission tomography	A type of x-ray test

PFT	Pulmonary function test	You may need PFTs to find out how your lungs are working.
PID	Pelvic inflammatory disease	Infection and inflammation of the female reproductive organs
PMS	Premenstrual syndrome	A group of symptoms that may happen before a woman's period
PPD	Purified protein derivative	You may have a PPD skin test for tuberculosis.
PRN	As needed	Your doctor may write this on your prescription.
PSA	Prostate specific antigen	You may have a blood test for PSA to detect prostate disease.
PT	Prothrombin time	A measure of blood clotting
PTH	Parathyroid hormone	You may have a blood test for PTH to detect parathyroid disease.
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress syndrome	An illness caused by traumatic events
PTT	Partial thromboplastin time	A measure of blood clotting
PUD	Peptic ulcer disease	A disease of the stomach
PVC	Premature ventricular contraction	A disturbance of the rhythm of the heart
QID	Four times a day	Your doctor may write this on your prescription.
RA	Rheumatoid arthritis	A type of joint disease
RBC	Red blood cell	A type of blood cell
RSV	Respiratory syncytial virus	A virus that causes infections in children
Rx	Prescription	
SAD	Seasonal affective disorder	Depression during seasons with little light
SIDS	Sudden infant death syndrome	
SLE	Systemic lupus erythematosus	Lupus for short
SOB	Shortness of Breath	
STD	Sexually transmitted disease	
T3	Triiodothyronine	You may have a blood test for T3 to detect thyroid disease.
T4	Thyroxine	You may have a blood test for T4 to detect thyroid disease.
TB	Tuberculosis	An infection of the lungs
TAH	Total abdominal hysterectomy	Surgery to remove a woman's uterus (womb)
TIA	Transient ischemic attack	A small stroke
TIBC	Total iron binding capacity	A test that measures the amount of iron in your blood
TID	Three times a day	Your doctor may write this on your prescription.
TMJ	Temporomandibular joint	The joint that connects your jaw to the side of your head
TORCH	Stands for a group of infections that may cause birth defects	A newborn will have this test to check for infections. Sometimes the mother also needs the test.
TSH	Thyroid stimulating hormone	You may have a blood test for TSH to detect thyroid disease.
TURP	Transurethral resection of prostate gland	An operation to remove parts of the prostate gland
URI	Upper respiratory infection	Another name for the common cold
UTI	Urinary tract infection	Infection of the bladder and kidneys
XRT	Radiotherapy	Therapy that uses radiation, usually for cancer
WBC	White blood cell	A type of blood cell