Medical Abbreviations & Terminology

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Foundations & Vital Signs | 60 abbreviations and 60 terms across this reference

ABBREVIATION	MEANING	MEDICAL TERM	DEFINITION
BP	Blood pressure	Anatomy	Study of body structures.
HR	Heart rate	Physiology	Study of how the body functions.
RR	Respiratory rate	Homeostasis	Maintenance of stable internal conditions.
T	Temperature	Anterior	Toward the front of the body.
SpO2	Peripheral oxygen saturation	Posterior	Toward the back of the body.
VS	Vital signs	Superior	Above or toward the head.
BMI	Body mass index	Inferior	Below or toward the feet.
Ht	Height	Medial	Toward the body's midline.
Wt	Weight	Lateral	Away from the body's midline.
O2	Oxygen	Proximal	Closer to the point of attachment.
ECG / EKG	Electrocardiogram	Distal	Farther from the point of attachment.
AED	Automated external defibrillator	Supine	Lying face upward.
CPR	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation	Prone	Lying face downward.
BLS	Basic life support	Tachycardia	An abnormally fast heart rate.
ACLS	Advanced cardiovascular life support	Bradycardia	An abnormally slow heart rate.
PPE	Personal protective equipment	Hypertension	Persistently elevated blood pressure.
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Hypotension	Abnormally low blood pressure.
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act	Dyspnea	Difficult or uncomfortable breathing.
EMS	Emergency medical services	Apnea	Temporary cessation of breathing.
ED	Emergency department	Hypoxia	Inadequate oxygen in body tissues.

Study reference: abbreviations can have multiple meanings. Confirm context and follow your facility's approved terminology. Write unclear abbreviations in full.

Medical Abbreviations & Terminology

CPRCourses InternationalLLC | Allied HealthStudentReference

Laboratory & Specimen Collection | 60 abbreviations and 60 terms across this reference

ABBREVIATION	MEANING	MEDICAL TERM	DEFINITION
CBC	Complete blood count	Venipuncture	Puncture of a vein to obtain blood or access.
RBC	Red blood cell	Capillary puncture	Skin puncture to collect a small blood sample.
WBC	White blood cell	Phlebotomy	Collection of blood, typically for testing.
Hgb	Hemoglobin	Hemolysis	Breakdown of red blood cells.
Hct	Hematocrit	Hematoma	Localized collection of blood outside vessels.
PLT	Platelet count	Hemostasis	The process of stopping bleeding.
BMP	Basic metabolic panel	Anticoagulant	Substance that prevents or reduces clotting.
CMP	Comprehensive metabolic panel	Coagulation	The process of blood clot formation.
BUN	Blood urea nitrogen	Serum	Liquid portion of blood after clotting.
HbA1c	Hemoglobin A1c	Plasma	Liquid portion of anticoagulated blood.
PT	Prothrombin time (laboratory context)	Erythrocyte	Red blood cell; transports oxygen.
INR	International normalized ratio	Leukocyte	White blood cell; supports immune defense.
aPTT	Activated partial thromboplastin time	Thrombocyte	Platelet; helps form blood clots.
UA	Urinalysis	Anemia	Reduced hemoglobin or red cell mass.
ABG	Arterial blood gas	Leukocytosis	Increased white blood cell count.
HDL	High-density lipoprotein	Thrombocytopenia	Abnormally low platelet count.
LDL	Low-density lipoprotein	Asepsis	Practices that prevent microbial contamination.
TSH	Thyroid-stimulating hormone	Antiseptic	Agent used on living tissue to reduce microbes.
Na	Sodium	Disinfection	Reduction or elimination of many microbes on objects.
K	Potassium	Sterilization	Elimination of all microbial life, including spores.

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Clinical Care & Cardiac Terminology | 60abbreviations and60termsacrossthisreference

ABBREVIATION	MEANING	MEDICAL TERM	DEFINITION
IV	Intravenous	Electrocardiogram	Recording of the heart's electrical activity.
IM	Intramuscular	Arrhythmia	Abnormal heart rhythm.
PO	By mouth (oral route)	Electrode	Sensor used to detect electrical activity.
NPO	Nothing by mouth	Artifact	Interference that distorts a recorded signal.
PRN	As needed	Myocardium	Muscular layer of the heart.
STAT	Immediately	Ischemia	Inadequate blood supply to tissue.
Hx	History	Infarction	Tissue death caused by loss of blood supply.
Dx	Diagnosis	Systole	Contraction phase of the heart cycle.
Tx	Treatment	Diastole	Relaxation phase of the heart cycle.
Rx	Prescription	Edema	Swelling caused by fluid in tissues.
CC	Chief complaint	Cyanosis	Bluish discoloration associated with low oxygenation.
HPI	History of present illness	Syncope	Brief loss of consciousness; fainting.
ROS	Review of systems	Hyperglycemia	Abnormally high blood glucose.
ROM	Range of motion	Hypoglycemia	Abnormally low blood glucose.
ADL	Activities of daily living	Acute	Rapid onset or a short course.
HTN	Hypertension	Chronic	Persistent or long-lasting.
DM	Diabetes mellitus	Etiology	Cause or origin of a condition.
COPD	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Diagnosis	Identification of a disease or condition.
UTI	Urinary tract infection	Prognosis	Expected course or outcome of a condition.
DVT	Deep vein thrombosis	Contraindication	Reason a treatment or procedure should be avoided.

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