

### Pharmaceutical Latin

Doctors and pharmacists regularly use Latin when prescriptions are written or filled. This is because this language, when it was first used for this purpose, provided a standardized form which could be followed everywhere in the European world, and later elsewhere, without there being any possibility of confusion.

The following list gives most of the Latin expressions used by doctors and pharmacists when prescriptions are written, together with their abbreviated forms (nowadays, when a pharmacist types an abbreviated form into a computer, the computer will print out a translation in the language of the country). The abbreviations *a.m.* (ante meridiem, 'before midday') and *p.m.* (post meridiem, 'after midday') are also used as they are used in ordinary writing and speech, and *et* ('and') is sometimes used to combine words or phrases.

Abbreviations of English instructions, such as AAA, 'apply (to) affected area' or B.S. (blood sugar) have been omitted.

*ad lib(itum)* (ad lib.): 'at pleasure', *i.e.*, freely or as required.

*ante cibum* (a.c.): 'before food/meals'.

*agita* (agit.): 'shake' (a command).

*alternis horis* (alt. h.): 'in alternate hours, every other hour'.

*ante meridiem* (a.m.): 'before midday'.

*aqua* (aq): 'water'.

*aure dextra* (abbreviated as a.d. or in aur. dext.): 'in the right ear'; *cf. aure sinistra*, (a.s. or in aur. sin.) 'in left ear' and *aure utraque* (a.u.), 'in each ear'.

*bis*: 'twice'.

*bis die sumendum* (bd or bds): 'to be taken twice a day'.

*bis in die* (b.i.d. or b.d.): 'twice a day'.

*bolus*: a Latin word meaning 'throw/cast' (of a fishing net or a throw of the dice), that has come to be used to describe a single (usually large) pill.

*bucca* (bucc): 'inside the cheek'.

*cum* (c or c., often written in handwriting with a bar or wavy line over the letter): 'with'. It can sometimes be combined with an English word, so that 'cf' or 'c.f.' can mean 'with food', but this mixture of languages is not the best way of using these abbreviations.

*cum cibo* (cc): 'with food', although care is needed, because in some contexts the same abbreviation can mean 'cubic centimetres'.

*diebus alternis* (dieb. alt.): 'on alternate days/every other day'.

*dentur tales doses* (d.t.d.): 'let such doses be given'.

*ex aqua* (ex aq.): 'from (*i.e.*, 'in') water'.

*ex modo prescripto* (e.m.p.): 'in the manner prescribed/as directed'.

*fiat* (ft): 'let it be made'.

*gutta* or *guttae* (gtt or gtts): 'drop' or 'drops'.

*hora* (h or hr): 'hour'.

*hora somni* (h.s.): 'at the hour of sleep', *i.e.*, at bedtime.

*liquor* (liq): 'solution'.

*mane*: 'in the morning' (*cf.* nocte).

*misce* (m.): 'mixe'.

*more dicto utendum* (m.d.u.): 'to be used in the manner directed'.

*mistura* (mist.): 'mixture'.

*mitte*: 'send'.

*nil per os* (npo): 'nothing by mouth', *i.e.*, no food or drink to be taken.

*nocte*: 'at night' (*cf.* mane).

*non repetatur* (non rep.): ‘Let it not be repeated’ (*i.e.*, no repeat prescriptions).

*oculo dextro* (o.d.): ‘in the right eye’.

*oculo sinistro* (o.s.): ‘in the left eye’.

*oculo utroque* (o.u.): ‘in each eye’.

*omni in die* (od): ‘on every day/daily’. The abbreviation ‘od’ is also used for *oculo dextro*, ‘in the right eye’. The form *omni* is more correct than *omne*, which is sometimes found.

*omni mane* (om): ‘every morning’.

*omni nocte* (on): ‘every night’.

*per*: ‘by/through’.

*per os* (p.o.): ‘by/through the mouth, orally’.

*per rectum*: (p.r. or pr): ‘by/through/into the rectum’ (not to be confused with prn or *pro re nata*).

*per vaginam* (pv): ‘by/through/into the vagina’.

*post cibum*: ‘after food/meals’.

*post meridiem* (p.m.): ‘after midday’.

*pro re nata* (prn): ‘according to the thing that arises, as appropriate’ (very idiomatic, and not to be confused with p.r.).

*pulvis* (pulv.): ‘powder’.

*quantum sufficit* (q.s.): ‘as much as is necessary’.

*quaque alterno die* (q.a.d.): ‘every other day’.

*quaque die* (q.d. or q.l.d.): ‘every day’.

*quaque die ante meridiem* (q.a.m.): ‘every day before midday/noon’.

*quaque die post meridiem* (q.p.m.): ‘every day in the afternoon’.

*quaque hora*: (q.h., q.1 h): ‘every hour/hourly’ (the number ‘1’ can be replaced by other numbers).

*Quaque mane* (qm): ‘every morning’.

*quater die sumendus* (q.d.s. or q.i.d. for *quarter in die*): ‘to be taken four times a day’.

*repetatur*: (rep. rept.): ‘let it be repeated’ (usually with a number).

*secundum artem* (s.a.): ‘according to the art/accepted practice’ (*i.e.*, do what is usually done, or modify if appropriate).

*semel in die* (sid, s.i.d.): ‘once a day’.

*signa* (sig): ‘write’ (on label).

*si opus sit* (s.o.s., si op. sit): ‘if there be need, if necessary’.

*sine* (s, usually with a bar over the letter to indicate a contraction): ‘without’.

*Statim* (stat): ‘immediately’.

*sub lingua* (sl): ‘under the tongue/sublingually’.

*ter die sumendum* (t.d.s., tds): ‘to be taken three times a day’.

*ter in die* (t.i.d.): ‘three times a day’.

*ut dictum* (u.d., ut dict.): ‘as directed’.