

Common Medical Abbreviations for Dementia Care

Quick reference for clinical notes, care coordination, and caregiver communication

This guide is meant as a handy reference. Some abbreviations can have more than one meaning depending on the setting, specialty, or facility, so always read them in context.

Abbreviation / Term	Meaning
AD	Alzheimer's disease
ADL	Activities of Daily Living
AFib	Atrial fibrillation
AKI	Acute kidney injury
AMS	Altered mental status
A&Ox1-4	Alert and oriented to person, place, time, and situation (score varies by how many domains are correct)
AVS	After-visit summary
Aphasia	Impairment in language expression or understanding
Ataxia	Lack of voluntary coordination of muscle movements
BID	Twice a day
BMI	Body mass index
BP	Blood pressure
BPSD	Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia
CBC	Complete blood count
CHF	Congestive heart failure
CKD	Chronic kidney disease
CMP	Comprehensive metabolic panel
CN II-XII	Cranial nerves 2 through 12
CNA	Certified nursing assistant
CNS	Central nervous system
CPR	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
CT	Computed tomography
CVA	Cerebrovascular accident (stroke)
D/C	Discontinue or discharge (meaning depends on context)
DM	Diabetes mellitus
DME	Durable medical equipment
DNR	Do not resuscitate
DOE	Dyspnea on exertion
Delirium	Acute change in attention and cognition, often fluctuating
Dx	Diagnosis
EEG	Electroencephalogram
EKG/ECG	Electrocardiogram
FTT	Failure to thrive
Fall risk	Increased likelihood of falling; often used in care plans and handoff notes
GERD	Gastroesophageal reflux disease
GI	Gastrointestinal
GU	Genitourinary

Abbreviation / Term	Meaning
HHA	Home health aide
H&P	History and physical
HTN	Hypertension
Hx	History
IADL	Instrumental Activities of Daily Living
ICP	Intracranial pressure
IDT	Interdisciplinary team
I&O	Intake and output
IV	Intravenous
LOC	Level of consciousness
LP	Lumbar puncture
LPN/LVN	Licensed practical nurse / licensed vocational nurse
MAR	Medication administration record
MCI	Mild cognitive impairment
MMSE	Mini-Mental State Examination
MOCA/MoCA	Montreal Cognitive Assessment
MRI	Magnetic resonance imaging
Meds	Medications
Mini-Cog	Brief cognitive screening tool
NPO	Nothing by mouth
NS	Normal saline
Neuro	Neurologic / neurology
OT	Occupational therapy / therapist
PCP	Primary care provider
PO	By mouth / orally
PRN	As needed
PT	Physical therapy / therapist
PUD	Pressure ulcer / pressure injury (usage varies)
Q shift	Every shift
QHS	Every night at bedtime
QID	Four times a day
QOL	Quality of life
RN	Registered nurse
ROM	Range of motion
ROS	Review of systems
RR	Respiratory rate
Resident	Term often used in long-term care for a person living in the facility
SBA	Stand-by assist
SLP	Speech-language pathologist / pathology
SNF	Skilled nursing facility
SOAP	Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan
SOB	Shortness of breath
S/S	Signs and symptoms
Sundowning	Late-day increase in confusion, agitation, or distress often seen in dementia
TID	Three times a day
UTI	Urinary tract infection
VS	Vital signs
WNL	Within normal limits