

# Nurse Charting Cheat Sheet

## Nurse charting guidelines

### General

1. All chart entries must be printed except for the nurse's signature.
2. Nurse's signature:
  - Consists of the initial of the first name and the full last name.
  - Should appear on a separate line below the nurse's recorded notations.
  - Must be legible but not overly conspicuous.
  - A single signature covers a series of statements or notations, not individual entries.
3. Nurses must complete necessary notations before going "off duty" for all assigned patients.
4. All recordings must be neat, legible, and meaningful.
5. Entries should be accurate, concise, and relevant.
6. Use terse statements rather than full sentences.
7. Employ correct spelling and official abbreviations only.
8. Accurate and truthful recording is essential as the chart may serve as court evidence.

### Formatting, ink usage and time rules

1. Use blue or black ink to write proper headings on new pages or sheets.
2. Keep recordings within the chart's pale limits. Start each entry on a horizontal line at its intersection with vertical limiting lines.
3. Prohibited styles: Avoid ornamental lettering.
4. Ink usage and time rules
  - Daytime recording (7:00 AM–11:00 PM): Use blue or black ink.
  - Nighttime Recording (11:00 PM–7:00 AM): Use red ink.

### Content recording

1. Record the exact time of treatments, medications, symptoms, and doctor visits.
2. Observations column:
  - Record symptoms, complaints, and condition changes.
  - Document treatments, medications, and their effects.
  - Include routine nursing procedures and physician visits.
3. Avoid redundancy: Do not print the word "patient"; all notations inherently refer to the patient.
4. Doctor's orders: Avoid phrases like "Dr. Smith ordered backrest elevated two inches."
5. Do not erase errors.
6. Correction Process:
  - Strike through the error with a line from the upper left to the lower right corner.
  - Label it as "ERROR" and sign underneath.
  - Consult a supervisor if unsure about recopying pages.
  - If a page is recopied, file the original at the back of the chart.

## Rules for printing

1. Use well-formed, individual letters.
2. Avoid unnecessary curves, tails, or fancy strokes.
3. Ensure all letters stand erect with minimal slant.
4. Use one space per letter, with single-letter spacing between words.
5. Rest all letters on the line.
6. Keep small letters  $\frac{2}{3}$  the height of capital letters.
7. "U" should have a curved bottom.
8. "V" should form an acute angle at the bottom.
9. Cross "t" at the upper third of its height.
10. Use "bed" to remember the orientation of loops for "b" and "d."
11. Print numbers clearly and in accordance with the charting style.

## Medical chart and record abbreviations and acronyms

- **A&O:** Alert and oriented
- **ALS or BLS:** Advanced or basic life support
- **AMA:** Against medical advice
- **BM:** Bowel movement
- **C/O:** Complaint of
- **CC:** Chief complaint
- **CP:** Chest pain
- **CV:** Cardiovascular
- **DC:** Discharge or discontinue
- **DDx:** Differential diagnosis
- **DNR:** Do not resuscitate
- **DOB:** Date of birth
- **DOE:** Dyspnea on exertion
- **Dx:** Diagnosis
- **EBL:** Estimated blood loss
- **FB:** Foreign body
- **Fx:** Fracture
- **GI:** Gastrointestinal
- **GSW:** Gunshot wound
- **H&P:** History & physical
- **H/O:** History of
- **HPI:** History of present illness
- **I&O:** Intake and output
- **IBW:** Ideal body weight
- **ICU:** Intensive care unit
- **ID:** Infectious disease
- **MDM:** Medical decision making
- **MVA:** Motor vehicle accident
- **NAD:** No acute distress
- **NKDA:** No known drug allergies
- **PCP:** Primary care physician
- **RF:** Risk factors
- **ROS:** Review of systems
- **S/P:** Status post
- **SOB:** Shortness of breath
- **STAT:** Immediately
- **Sx:** Symptoms
- **Tx:** Treatment
- **UOP:** Urine output
- **WNL:** Within normal limits

## Additional notes

Nurse Journals. (2021, November 11). *Guide to nursing and healthcare acronyms and abbreviations* | [nursejournal.org](https://nursejournal.org/resources/nursing-and-healthcare-acronyms-and-abbreviations/). <https://nursejournal.org/resources/nursing-and-healthcare-acronyms-and-abbreviations/>

RNpedia. (2014, December 26). *Charting*. <https://www.rnpedia.com/nursing-notes/fundamentals-in-nursing-notes/charting/>