

- 5.4 Differentiate among three different types of medication orders.
- 5.5 List which health-care providers are able to write prescriptions.
- 5.6 Define abbreviations used in prescriptions.
- 5.7 Interpret labels safely.
- 5.8 Discuss the impact of e-prescribing on health-care consumers.

KEY TERMS

Automatic stop orders	Medication orders	Standing orders	Superscription
Electronic prescription	Rx	STAT orders	Verbal orders
Inscription	Signature	Subscription	

MEDICATION ORDERS

Medication orders are the prescriptions provided by a physician for a patient for a specific medication. Medication orders include written orders, verbal or standing orders, and stop orders. Prescriptions are dispensed only by health-care professionals who are licensed to do so. Pharmacists are licensed in all 50 states to dispense medications, and therefore must understand all of the different types of medication orders and the prescription itself. The prescription order itself contains some basic information, such as the preprinted prescriber's name and contact information. Knowing the basic parts of a medication order aids in ensuring the patient's safety because of the many different medications, routes of administration, and times for taking them. This knowledge also helps to prevent errors and to teach patients important facts about their medications. Review the abbreviations presented in Chapter 3 (Tables 3-2 and 3-3); in addition, Table 5-1 lists common abbreviations used. Abbreviations can vary from one setting to the next, so be sure to check which are—and are not—accepted at your workplace. The most accepted abbreviations along with the commonly misinterpreted abbreviations can be found on the Institute for Safe Medication Practices website (www.ismp.org).

Written Orders

Obtain a written order for a prescription whenever possible, to decrease the chance of misinterpretation of information written on the order and subsequent errors. Legally, every drug that is ordered, administered, or dispensed must also have written documentation by the prescriber. Having this information in writing protects the health-care professional who administers or dispenses the drug from possible later discrepancies between what the prescriber meant to order and what was actually given or administered. The prescriber should write or type the prescription accurately. A health-care facility is a busy workplace, and errors result from haste or sloppy penmanship. As a health-care professional, you help ensure the patient's safety by proofreading a prescription before the patient takes it to the pharmacy. If a prescriber has poor handwriting, offer to write or type the prescription, and then have the prescriber

TABLE 5.1 Abbreviations Related to Medication Administration

Abbreviation	Meaning	Abbreviation	Meaning
cap	capsule	mL	milliliter
elix	elixir	Mg	milligram
G	gram	Oz	ounce
Gr	grain	Tab	tablet
Gtt	drops	T, Tb	tablespoon
mcg	microgram	t, tsp	teaspoon
mEq	milliequivalent		