

# Medication Line

## Quick Implementation Guide

**Edition 1**  
**20<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

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This document was prepared for NHS Connecting for Health which ceased to exist on 31 March 2013. It may contain references to organisations, projects and other initiatives which also no longer exist. If you have any questions relating to any such references, or to any other aspect of the content, please contact [cui stakeholder.mailbox@hscic.gov.uk](mailto:cui stakeholder.mailbox@hscic.gov.uk)

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## Introduction

Medications may be represented electronically in varying degrees of detail as well as in different areas of a user interface. For example:

- A prescription summary displayed as part of a patient summary
- A subset of prescription detail displayed in a list of a patient's current medications
- A different subset of prescription detail displayed in an electronic drug administration schedule

A text description of a medication appearing in such views is referred to in this guidance as a 'medication line'. The guidance in this document details the content, formatting and layout of medication lines. The guidance applies to all views intended to support medications management for a single patient in a hospital ward

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## Important

Although it contains all of the guidance points, this document omits supporting information and is therefore not intended as a substitute for the full NHS CUI documents *Medication Line*<sup>1</sup>. Refer to that document for the definitive statement of the design guidance in this area.

The visual representations used to display the guidance are illustrative only. Stylistic choices (for example, display font used), unless otherwise specified, are not part of the guidance and are therefore not mandatory requirements.

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<sup>1</sup>Medications Management – Medication Line – User Interface Design Guidance (v2.0.0.0)

## Introduction

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The following examples show how the guidance can be applied to four different styles of medication line in four notional views:

View 1



Medication Line 1

**diltiazem** – CALCICARD CR – modified-release tablet – **DOSE 120 mg** – oral – three times a day

View 2



Medication Line 2

**diltiazem** – CALCICARD CR –  
modified-release tablet  
**DOSE 120 mg**  
**ROUTE** oral – three times a day

View 3



Medication Line 3

**diltiazem** – CALCICARD CR – modified-release tablet  
**DOSE 120 mg** – oral – three times a day

View 4



Medication Line 4

**diltiazem** – CALCICARD CR  
**FORM** modified-release tablet  
**DOSE 120 mg**  
**ROUTE** oral  
**FREQUENCY** three times a day

## Formatting Drug Names

diltiazem – CALCICARD CR

↑  
bold

MEDI-001

Display generic drug names in bold

Mandatory

diltiazem – CALCICARD CR

↑  
lowercase

MEDI-002

Display generic drug names in lowercase (capital letters may still be used for acronyms and abbreviations in some drug names such as amphotericin B, factor VIII, carbomer 974P)

Mandatory

diltiazem – CALCICARD CR

↑  
uppercase

MEDI-003

Display drug brand names in uppercase

Mandatory

diltiazem – CALCICARD CR

generic name (first)      brand name

MEDI-013

Where both the generic name and the brand name appear in a medication line, list the generic name first

Mandatory

### Displaying Numbers

**paracetamol** – tablet

**DOSE** 1 g – oral – every 6 hours

**paracetamol** – tablet

**DOSE** 500 mg – oral – every 6 hours

MEDI-014

Where possible, avoid the need for decimal points by changing the units without breaking convention

*Recommended*

INFANRIX-IPV Vaccine –

suspension for injection

**DOSE** 0.5 mL – oral – every 6 hours

MEDI-015

Do not put a trailing zero after a sub-decimal value (that is, '0.5' is correct but '0.50' is incorrect)

**Mandatory**

MEDI-016

Put a leading zero before a decimal point for values of less than one

**Mandatory**

**DOSE** 5,000 units

↑  
comma

MEDI-017

Use a comma to break up numeric values of one thousand and above

**Mandatory**

## Separators

**paracetamol** – 120 mg in 5 mL –  
suspension – **DOSE** 80 mg – oral –  
every 6 hours

MEDI-018

When combining attributes in a text string, use a long dash (em dash) surrounded by spaces between the attributes

Mandatory

**double spaces**  
↓                  ↓  
**paracetamol** 500 mg +  
**metoclopramide** 5 mg – sachet –  
**DOSE** 2 sachets – oral –  
every 4 hours as required –  
maximum 6 doses in 24 hours

MEDI-019

Use a double space instead of a long dash or separator between a drug name and strength when there are multiple drug names in one medication line

Recommended

**double space**  
↓  
**sodium chloride** 0.9% – infusion –  
**VOLUME** 1,000 mL – 40 mL per hour –  
over 12 hours – intravenous –  
once only

MEDI-020

Use a double space instead of a long dash or separator between a drug name and strength when the strength is expressed as a percentage

Recommended

# Wrapping

insulin soluble human –  
ACTRAPID – 100 units per mL –  
solution for injection –  
**DOSE 12 units** – subcutaneous –  
twice a day

MEDI-010

When wrapping the text of a medication line, do so without breaking up the contents of a single attribute unless that single attribute will not fit on one line

**Mandatory**

insulin soluble human –  
ACTRAPID – 100 units per mL –  
solution for injection –  
**DOSE 12 units** – subcutaneous –  
twice a day

↑  
trailing delimiter

MEDI-011

When wrapping the text of a medication line, keep trailing delimiters with the preceding attribute

**Mandatory**

haemophilus influenzae  
type B vaccine –  
solution for injection –  
**DOSE 0.5 mL** –  
intramuscular – once only

MEDI-021

If a long drug name exceeds the available screen space and has to be wrapped, ensure that the drug name is wrapped between words

**Mandatory**

## Abbreviation

**paracetamol** 500 mg +  
**metoclopramide** 5 mg – sachet –  
oral – **DOSE 2 sachets –**  
every 4 hours as required –  
maximum 6 doses in 24 hours

**sodium chloride** 0.9% – infusion –  
**VOLUME 1,000 mL –**  
40 mL per hour – over 8 hours –  
intravenous – once only

MEDI-022

Do not abbreviate drug names

**Mandatory**

MEDI-023

Use long form names rather than  
abbreviations or symbols where  
possible

*Recommended*

MEDI-024

Do not put a full stop after  
abbreviations for units (for  
example mg and mL)

**Mandatory**

### Truncation

**cefotaxime –**

powder for solution for injection –  
intravenous – **DOSE 400 mg –**  
every 8 hours

MEDI-025

**Do not truncate drug names**

**Mandatory**

MEDI-012

If necessary, wrap but do not  
truncate medication line  
information

**Mandatory**

MEDI-054

Do not display a part of the  
medication line alone if its  
meaning relies on other parts  
that are not displayed

**Mandatory**

## Symbols

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| @ | At sign              |
|   | Vertical bar         |
| > | Greater than bracket |
| < | Less than bracket    |
| / | Forward slash        |
| \ | Backslash            |
| & | Ampersand            |
| ° | Degree               |

MEDI-026

Do not use symbols that may be confused with numbers or otherwise misinterpreted, including those illustrated

Mandatory

↓↓  
spaces

**paracetamol** 500 mg +  
**metoclopramide** 5 mg – sachet –  
 oral – **DOSE** 2 sachets –  
 every 4 hours as required –  
 maximum 6 doses in 24 hours

MEDI-027

Use the ‘+’ (plus symbol) only for multiple drug name medications and surround it with spaces. When a ‘+’ is displayed adjacent to a ‘4’, separate the two with a double space

Mandatory

**paracetamol** – tablet  
**DOSE** 1 g – oral – every 6 hours

↑  
dash

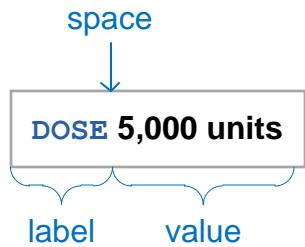
MEDI-028

Use alternatives such as a dash or a black dot (•) instead of brackets and separators such as those illustrated that look like the number one

Mandatory

|     |             |
|-----|-------------|
| ( ) | Parentheses |
| [ ] | Brackets    |
| { } | Braces      |

### Text Labels



MEDI-009

Use a different font and colour to differentiate labels from values

**Mandatory**

MEDI-031

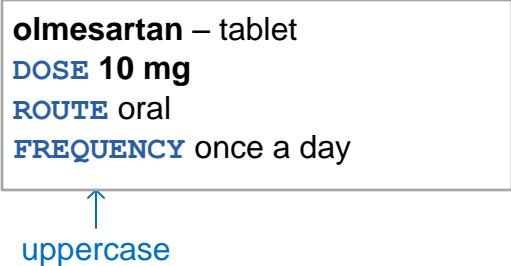
Use a space to separate a label from a value

**Mandatory**

MEDI-032

Do not use a colon after a label

**Mandatory**



MEDI-033

Display labels in uppercase

*Recommended*

## Text Labels

**co-amoxiclav –**  
400 mg and 57 mg in 5 mL –  
suspension – oral – **DOSE 1.2 mL –**  
every 12 hours

label

MEDI-034

Keep the number of text labels in a medication represented as a single-text sentence to a minimum

*Recommended*

**co-amoxiclav –**  
400 mg and 57 mg in 5 mL –  
suspension – oral –  
**DOSE 1.2 mL –** every 12 hours

new line (hard line break)

MEDI-029

When a medication is represented as a single-text sentence, use a label for dose only

**Mandatory**

**co-amoxiclav –**  
400 mg and 57 mg in 5 mL –  
suspension – oral –  
**DOSE 1.2 mL –** every 12 hours

MEDI-030

When a medication is represented as a series of lines with hard line breaks, labels should appear at the beginning of a new line after a hard line break

**Mandatory**

### Line Breaks

**paracetamol** – tablet  
**DOSE 1 g** – oral – every 6 hours

new line (hard line break)

**oxycodone** – OXYCONTIN –  
modified-release tablet  
**DOSE 10 mg** – oral – once only

new line (hard line break)

**DIORALYTE** –  
powder for oral solution  
**DOSE 1 sachet** – oral – once only

new line (hard line break)

MEDi-035

When using hard line breaks at set points (such as before a dose), do not use a long dash at the end of the previous line

*Recommended*

## Line Spacing

**paracetamol** – tablet

**DOSE 1 g** – oral – every 6 hours

↑ line height from 120% to 140%

MEDI-036

When displaying a medication as one or many lines of text, preserve white space between the lines by ensuring that the line height is no less than 120% (120% leading) and no greater than 140% (140% leading)

*Recommended*

**paracetamol** – tablet

**DOSE 1 g** – oral – every 6 hours

↓ at least 100% of line height

**oxycodone** – OXYCONTIN –

modified-release tablet

**DOSE 10 mg** – oral – once only

MEDI-037

When displaying a list of medications, ensure that there is a space equivalent to at least one line height of 100% between the last line of one medication line and the first line of the medication line below

*Recommended*

### Displaying Dose

**morphine** – 2 mg in 10 mL –  
solution for injection – **DOSE 2 mg** –  
intravenous – once only

MEDI-007

Provide a text label that reads  
'DOSE' before a dose

**Mandatory**

**sodium chloride** 0.9% – infusion –  
**VOLUME 1,000 mL** –  
40 mL per hour –  
over 12 hours – intravenous –  
once only

MEDI-039

When a dose is expressed as a  
volume, display the volume  
amount in bold

**Mandatory**

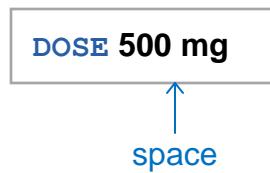
MEDI-040

When there is no dose or  
volume, display a dose  
equivalent in place of the dose  
and subject to the same  
guidance points as a dose.  
Precede with an appropriate text  
label

**Mandatory**

## Displaying Dose

MEDI-041



Separate the dose amount from the dose units with a space

Mandatory

INFANRIX-IPV Vaccine –  
suspension for injection  
**DOSE 0.5 mL** – oral – every 6 hours

MEDI-042

Do not put a trailing zero after a sub-decimal value when displaying a dose amount (that is, '0.5' is correct but '0.50' is incorrect)

Mandatory

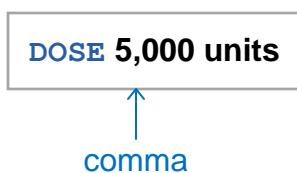
INFANRIX-IPV Vaccine –  
suspension for injection  
**DOSE 0.5 mL** – oral – every 6 hours

A blue arrow points from the words "leading zero" to the digit "0" in "0.5".

MEDI-043

Put a leading zero before a decimal point for values of less than one when displaying a dose value

Mandatory



MEDI-044

Use a comma to break up numeric values of one thousand and above when displaying a dose value

Mandatory

### Displaying Strength

**co-amoxiclav –**

400 and 57 mg in 5 mL –  
suspension – oral – **DOSE 1.2 mL –**  
every 12 hours

MEDI-045

When describing strengths with an active ingredient in a fluid, use 'in' rather than a forward slash ( '/') before the fluid quantity

**Mandatory**

**heparin – 5,000 units per mL –**

solution for injection –  
**DOSE 5,000 units –** subcutaneous  
injection – once only

MEDI-046

When describing strengths of an ingredient in a single unit of fluid, use the word 'per' to describe the unit of fluid

**Mandatory**

**co-codamol – 8 and 500 mg –**

tablet – oral – **DOSE 1 tablet –**  
every 4 to 6 hours as required

MEDI-047

When describing a strength for a combination drug whose two strength values use the same unit (such as mg), use the word 'and' in a smaller font to join the two strength values and display the units after the second strength value

**Mandatory**

## Displaying Strength



MEDI-048

Do not put a trailing zero after a decimal point when displaying numbers in a strength value

*Recommended*

MEDI-049

Put a leading zero before a decimal point for values of less than one when displaying numbers in a strength value

*Recommended*

**heparin** – 5,000 units per mL –  
solution for injection –  
**DOSE 5,000 units** – subcutaneous  
injection – once only

MEDI-050

Use a comma to break up numeric values of one thousand and above when displaying numbers in a strength value

*Recommended*

### Attribute Order

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 1 | Drug name      |
| 2 | Brand name     |
| 3 | Strength       |
| 4 | Form           |
| 5 | Dose or volume |
| 6 | Rate           |
| 7 | Dose duration  |
| 8 | Route          |
| 9 | Frequency      |

MEDi-051

When describing a medication as a line of text, adhere to the order illustrated for the display of the medication attributes (as applicable)

*Recommended*

**morphine** – 10 mg in 2 mL –  
solution for injection – **DOSE 2 mg** –  
intravenous – once only

**oxycodone** – OXYCONTIN –  
modified-release tablet –  
**DOSE 10 mg** – oral – once only

## Attribute Order

**salbutamol** – metered dose inhaler  
**STRENGTH** 100 micrograms per dose  
**DOSE** **2 puffs**  
**ROUTE** inhaled  
every 4 hours as required –  
maximum 8 puffs in 24 hours

MEDI-052

When designing for specific contexts, especially those that need additional text labels and line breaks, display drug name first and display other attributes (in a different order if necessary) from the one defined above

*Recommended*

MEDI-053

When a medication is not displayed as a single line of text and the attributes of a medication are listed in a different order, use text labels for as many of the illustrated attributes as possible

*Recommended*