

HOUSTON METHODIST EDITORIAL STYLE QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

The Houston Methodist Editorial Style Quick Reference Guide provides some basic highlights or a “cheat sheet” of Houston Methodist’s in-house editorial style guide. **This document only provides highlights, please refer to the editorial style guide for all rules and exceptions for each category.**

EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDES USED AT HOUSTON METHODIST

In order of precedence:

- **Houston Methodist Editorial Style Guide** (Also available on **Houston Methodist BrandMaker**)
- **Associated Press Stylebook**
- **Merriam-Webster Dictionary**
- **Stedman’s Medical Dictionary** (for medical terminology)
- **Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary** (for medical terminology)

Note: For academic or technical writing, use the appropriate academic or technical guidelines and style preferred by the publication to which the manuscript is being submitted.

Category	Rule	Examples
Academic degrees and credentials	Do not use periods in academic degrees, licensures and professional designations.	Shawn Taylor, MD, MBA, FACC
	Order after name: academic degree, licensure, professional designation	Alice Jones, PhD, MSN, RN, CCRN
Acronyms and Initialisms¹	Should not be used on external, public-facing materials, but there are three exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Houston Methodist Institute for Technology, Innovation & Education (MITIESM) ▪ Houston Methodist Coordinated Care (HMCC) ▪ Houston Methodist Health Education and Living at The Woodlands (HEAL program) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internal ex. – HMCL, ECC, HMDHVC ▪ External ex. – Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital, Emergency Care Center, Houston Methodist DeBakey Heart & Vascular Center
Addresses²	Abbreviate all street locators and directional indicators only when used with a number to form an address.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6565 Fannin St. ▪ Fannin Street ▪ 1635 S. Voss Rd. ▪ South Voss Road

Category	Rule	Examples
Addresses²	Include the building name along with the address in the following order: Name Entity Name Department Name Street Address Building Name, Suite No. City, State ZIP	Dr. Timothy Smith Houston Methodist Hospital Department of Cardiology 6550 Fannin St. Smith Tower, Suite 1900 Houston, TX 77030
	States are abbreviated using the U.S. Post Office's postal codes, and only when part of an address.	6565 Fannin St. Houston, TX 77030
Bulleted lists³	Capitalize the first word in bulleted lists. Use a terminal punctuation mark, such as a period, at the end of a bulleted line only if the bullet forms a complete sentence. Bullets within the same list should be consistent. If one bullet forms a sentence, then all of the bullets should form a sentence.	During a mammogram: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The technologist will ask you to hold your breath for a few seconds while the image is taken. ▪ Several images of each breast will be taken from different angles. Images that come out unclear may have to be retaken.
	Bullets should be either in alphabetical order or in order of importance or relevance.	Examples of fruit that can be included in your diet are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apples ▪ Oranges ▪ Pears Dr. Campbell specializes in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Laparoscopic surgery ▪ Colon and rectal cancer ▪ Inflammatory bowel disease and Crohn's disease ▪ Diverticulitis
	If a bullet starts with a verb, they all should start with verbs of the same tense.	When preparing for surgery, patients should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow the doctor's written instructions ▪ Preregister in advance

Category	Rule	Examples
Capitalization	Capitalize proper nouns, and Houston Methodist centers, institutes, divisions, programs and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ English ▪ Google ▪ Houston Methodist ▪ John Smith ▪ Wound Care Program
	Job titles, specialties and conditions are not proper nouns and should not be capitalized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ director ▪ cardiology ▪ neurologist ▪ anemia
	Job titles that appear immediately before a name should be capitalized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patient Liaison Jim Peterson ▪ Jim Peterson, patient liaison
	Endowed titles are capitalized regardless of placement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jenny Chang, MD, Emily Hermann Chair in Cancer Research
	For conditions that include a proper name, only that name is capitalized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alzheimer's disease ▪ cancer
Dates and Times	When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. Spell out when using alone, or with a year alone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ January 1972 ▪ Jan. 2 ▪ May 8 ▪ Feb. 14, 1987
	When writing time, use periods with a.m. and p.m.; and use noon and midnight instead of 12 a.m. and 12 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 8:30 a.m. ▪ 5 p.m. ▪ noon
	When time is on the hour, no colon or zeros should be used, such as in 1:00 p.m.	1 p.m.
	Time range:	
	Separate by an en dash with a space before and after the dash.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. ▪ 10 p.m. – midnight
	When the time range falls within the same meridian (a.m. or p.m.), only a.m. or p.m. should only be written once and with a space between it and the last number.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5-7 p.m. ▪ 5 to 7 p.m. <p><i>(Note: There are no spaces around the hyphen between numbers)</i></p>

Category	Rule	Examples
Hyphenation	Connect two or more words with a hyphen when they act as one adjective forming a compound modifier.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ board-certified oncologist ▪ state-of-the-art technology
	Prefixes and suffixes are usually not hyphenated unless combined with a proper noun.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ nonprofit ▪ posttransplant ▪ preoperative ▪ systemwide ▪ non-Houston Methodist
	Sometimes when a prefix ends with the same letter as the first letter of the root word, you will hyphenate it. Check the style guides for the hyphenation rules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ preexisting ▪ anti-inflammatory
	Use a hyphen whenever ambiguity would result if it were omitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ re-creation (create again), recreation ▪ re-cover (cover again), recover
Measurements	Volume, doses, etc.:	
	As an exception to <i>AP Style</i> , in both adjective and noun form, use numerals and abbreviations without periods, with a space between.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 cm of intravenous fluid ▪ pressure of 160 mmHg ▪ 140 cc ▪ 35 mm film
	When abbreviating metric measurements, do not use a period after the abbreviation. For imperial measurements, use periods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ cm ▪ ft. ▪ in. ▪ L ▪ mg ▪ mL
	Distance, duration, etc.: Spell out numbers one through nine, and hyphenate adjectival forms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ eight-mile run ▪ 24-hour day
	Recipes: When abbreviating imperial measurements, such as cup, fluid ounce, ounce, pint, pound, quart, tablespoon, teaspoons, etc., add a period after the abbreviation. Do not add a period after metric measurements, such as gram, fluid ounce, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ¼ tsp. red pepper flakes ▪ 4 oz. ▪ 2 g sugar ▪ lb. or lbs. ▪ c. ▪ gal. ▪ oz. ▪ pt. ▪ qt. ▪ T. ▪ tsp.

Category	Rule	Examples
Nomenclature ⁴	<p>Centers, clinics, programs and services under centers of excellence: The name of centers, clinics, programs and services should be followed by “at” and then the name of the center of excellence.</p>	<p>High Risk Program at Houston Methodist Neal Cancer Center</p>
	<p>Centers, clinics, programs and services, excluding those under centers of excellence: Houston Methodist should appear at the beginning of the name of centers, clinics, programs and services, unless they are part of a Houston Methodist Hospital center of excellence, and should be followed by a hospital locator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Houston Methodist Neuroscience & Spine Center at Sugar Land ▪ Houston Methodist Wound Care Program at Baytown
	<p>Locator and footprint names:</p>	
	<p>The term “hospital” should not be included when using a hospital locator, except for Houston Methodist West Hospital.</p>	<p>Houston Methodist Spine Center at West Hospital, Houston Methodist Childbirth Center at Clear Lake</p>
	<p>Houston Methodist Hospital doesn't get a locator, except when discussing multiple locations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Houston Methodist Lung Center (not Houston Methodist Lung Center at Texas Medical Center)
	<p>When the location is identified by the hospital, the word “at” should precede one of the following hospital locators, which are placed at the end:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Baytown ▪ Clear Lake ▪ Cypress ▪ Texas Medical Center ▪ Sugar Land ▪ The Woodlands ▪ West Hospital⁵ ▪ Willowbrook 	<p>Houston Methodist Orthopedics & Sports Medicine at Willowbrook</p>
	<p>When the location is identified by street, the word “at” should precede the locator.</p>	<p>Houston Methodist Emergency Care Center at Kirby</p>
	<p>When the location is identified by the neighborhood or city, the word “in” should precede the locator.</p>	<p>Houston Methodist Comprehensive Care Center in Pearland</p>
	<p>Departments: The hospital name may appear before the department name or the department name can be followed by “at” and then the hospital name.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital Department of Surgery ▪ Department of Surgery at Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital

Category	Rule	Examples
Nomenclature ⁴	Departments: The hospital name may appear before the department name or the department name can be followed by “at” and then the hospital name.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital Department of Surgery ▪ Department of Surgery at Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital
	Donor-named programs: Donor-named departments, programs, centers or institutes precede the name of the next highest brand. The Houston Methodist Hospital Foundation maintains a complete list.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eddy Scurlock Stroke Center at Houston Methodist Neurological Institute ▪ Kenneth R. Peak Center for Brain and Pituitary Tumor Treatment and Research at Houston Methodist Hospital
Numbers	Spell out one through nine. Use numerals for 10 and above. Exceptions to this rule include the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ two certificates ▪ 12 days
	Ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 8 years old ▪ 8-year-old boy
	Scores	test score of 6
	Time of day	2 p.m.
	Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 8 cents ▪ \$5
	Percentages	4%, 2 percentage points
	Numbers higher than 999,999 when expressed as round numbers or in decimal form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 8 million ▪ 3.2 billion
	Chromosome and gene numbers, proteins, cytokines, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ chromosome 24 ▪ BRCA1
	Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4:1 ▪ 1 in 4
	Weight	123 lbs., 4 oz.
	Dimensions: When using foot (') and inch (") symbols, use straight single or double quotation marks and not smart (curly or curved) quotation marks.	9 ft. by 12 ft. room, 8.5" x 11"
	Speed	15 mph
	Numerals for under 10 may be used in headlines, callouts, tables and infographics in marketing materials.	5 Women's Health Myths
Phone numbers	Use periods in phone numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 713.790.3333 ▪ +1.713.441.2340

Category	Rule	Examples
Punctuation	Ampersand: An ampersand (&) should be used only when it is an official part of a name and is not a substitute for “and” in copy. It may also be used in headlines and infographics.	Houston Methodist DeBakey Heart & Vascular Center
	Comma: Use commas (,) to separate elements in a series except before the conjunction (and, but, or) at the end of a simple series.	The assorted pills are red, blue, green and purple.
	Dash:	
	An en dash (–) is used to indicate inclusive dates.	Jan. 1 – Aug. 4
	An em dash (—) is used to show an abrupt change of thought or emphatic pause in a sentence. In this case, put a space on either side of the dash.	We will fly to Paris in June — if I get a raise.
	Ellipsis: The ellipsis (...) is used to indicate that one or more words has been deleted in a quote, text or other document. Put a space before and after the ellipsis.	The gunshot wound is ... one of the biggest and worst defects we, as physicians, see.
	Hyphens: Hyphens (-) are joiners. The hyphen is most commonly used to combine words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ firearm-related accident ▪ 4-foot-long ▪ 2-to-1 ▪ 12-15%
	Periods: Periods (.) end sentences and are followed by a single space.	This is my car. I need to take it to the shop.
	Quotation marks:	
	Closing quotation marks (“ ”) follow commas and periods ending the statement being quoted.	“Close the door,” he said. He said, “Close the door.”
	The dash, semicolon, colon, question mark and exclamation point go inside the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only, and go outside when they apply to the entire sentence.	“To be or not to be?”
	Semicolon: Use a semicolon (;) to indicate greater separation of thought and information than a comma conveys but less than the use of two separate sentences.	Dr. Amy Coburn is a third-generation physician in her family; her grandfathers on both sides were physicians.
	Slash: Use a slash only in common expressions or with numerals in fractions. Do not use slashes with dates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HIV/AIDS ▪ 9/11 ▪ 24/7

Category	Rule	Examples
Referring to Medical Doctors	The preferred first reference is to identify physicians using Dr. before their names in consumer publications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr. Janice Robinson ▪ Janice Robinson, MD (less preferred)
	For second reference, use the last name only.	Robinson is chair of the department.
	Do not use Dr. with someone without a medical degree in consumer communications. You may include the doctorate degree after the name.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ William Phillips, PhD ▪ Carol Stone, PharmD ▪ Sara Wellington, DNP, RN
URLs ⁶	URLs should be written without the preceding www. and with only lowercase letters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ houstonmethodist.org ▪ lifegift.org
Weill Cornell	Refer to Weill Cornell Medicine when discussing our affiliation.	Houston Methodist Hospital is an academic medical center affiliated with Weill Cornell Medicine.
	Use Weill Cornell Medical College when listing an individual's faculty position.	Dr. Alice Gonzales is a cardiologist at Houston Methodist Hospital and an associate professor of cardiology at Weill Cornell Medical College.

1. A full list of acronyms and initialisms is available in the style guide and online.
2. A full list of street address abbreviations and state abbreviations are available in the style guide.
3. The capitalization of most bullets in the examples column reflect the capitalization rules for the words listed when they do not appear at the beginning of a sentence or list.
4. The explanation for using Houston Methodist nomenclature, footprint and locators is available in the style guide..
5. Refer to the Hospital Locator Names section in the editorial style guide for a full explanation of when to use and when not to use the West Hospital locator.
6. When citing a URL, verify that the address is still accessible if the URL is written in lowercase letters or if "http://", "https://" or "www." are removed.