The American Osteopathic Association
Osteopathic Style Guide

Osteopathic physician (DO) describes a physician who trained in the United States and can prescribe medicine and practice in all specialty areas including surgery. Osteopathic physician should be used in all written and verbal communications instead of osteopath. Osteopath should only be used to describe a health care provider trained outside of the United States.

Osteopathic medicine is preferred over osteopathy when referring to medicine practiced by osteopathic physicians trained in the United States. Osteopathy should only be used when referring to the occupation of non-physician osteopaths or those trained outside of the United States.

Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine is the proper name for the degree granted by osteopathic medical schools in the United States and is represented by the acronym DO. Do not use Doctor of Osteopathy, which is an outdated term for the degree. DO also may be used in place of osteopathic physician.

How to Use the DO Designation

Use the DO designation when referring to an osteopathic physician in the first reference:

Jane M. Jones, DO

State a DO’s specialty as:

Dr. Jane M. Jones, an osteopathic radiologist
Dr. James A. Rodriguez, an osteopathic pediatrician

Hold more than one professional degree? Use:

Jane M. Jones, DO, PhD
James A. Rodriguez, DO, MPH

Utilize the terms family practice and family physician instead of general practice and general practitioner.

How to Refer to Osteopathic Medical Schools

Refer to osteopathic medical schools with their osteopathic identification:

Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine
Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences College of Osteopathic Medicine