

Converting between units of mass and volume

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Converting between units is an important skill, essential for safe prescribing.

The British National Formulary (BNF) makes the following recommendations on writing prescriptions (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2026a):

- Quantities of 1 gram or more should be written as 1 g, 1.5 g, etc. Quantities less than 1 gram should be written in milligrams, e.g. 500 mg, not 0.5 g
- Quantities less than 1 mg should be written in micrograms, e.g. 100 micrograms, not 0.1 mg
- The unnecessary use of decimal points should be avoided, e.g. 3 mg, not 3.0 mg
- When decimals are unavoidable a zero should be written in front of the decimal point where there is no other figure, e.g. 0.5 mL, not .5 mL
- Use of the decimal point is acceptable to express a range, e.g. 0.5 to 1 g.
- In addition, the BNF contains useful conversion charts for commonly encountered units (NICE, 2026b). To ensure you are able to implement the guidance, practice converting the following examples in units of mass and volume.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Prescription writing. 2026a.

<https://bnf.nice.org.uk/medicines-guidance/prescription-writing> (accessed 20 May 2026)

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Approximate Conversions and Units. 2026b. <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/about/approximate-conversions-and-units> (accessed 20 May 2026)

Table 1. Mass	
From	To
600 mg	G
1.8 g	mg
250 mg	G
2.5 g	mg
3000 mg	G
0.5 g	mg

Table 2. Volume	
From	To
600 ml	L
1.8 L	ml
250 ml	L
2.5 L	ml
3000 ml	L
0.5 L	ml