

## Osteopathic Style Guide

- **Osteopathic physician** (D.O.) is the preferred terminology over “osteopath.” **Osteopathic medicine** is preferred to “osteopathy.” This reflects the fact that osteopathic physicians are licensed by state as complete physicians to prescribe medication, perform surgery, and practice in all recognized medical specialties.

- The current *AP Style Book* entry for “doctor” reads:

Use **Dr.** in first reference as a formal title before the name of an individual who holds a doctor of medicine, doctor of osteopathic medicine, or doctor of podiatric medicine degree: *Dr. Jonas Salk.*

- The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) recommends using the D.O. designation when referring to doctors in a first or second reference: *Jane Jones, D.O.*

- The AP Style Book also states:

Because the public frequently identifies Dr. only with physicians, care should be taken to assure that the individual’s specialty is stated in the first or second reference.

- When stating a D.O.’s specialty, the AOA recommends:

Dr. Jane Jones, an osteopathic radiologist  
Dr. Jim Rodriguez, an osteopathic pediatrician

- If an osteopathic physician holds more than one professional degree, the AOA recommends:

Jane Jones, D.O., Ph.D.  
Jim Rodriguez, D.O., M.P.H.

- In 1993, the osteopathic medical profession ceased using the terms “general practice” and “general practitioner” and is now using the preferred terminology: **family practice** and **family physician**.

- Osteopathic medical colleges and osteopathic hospitals should be referred to with their osteopathic identification especially since some do not contain “osteopathic” in their names:

Botsford General Hospital, an osteopathic hospital  
University of Health Sciences, College of Osteopathic Medicine

For more information on osteopathic medicine, contact the AOA Communications Department at [info@osteopathic.org](mailto:info@osteopathic.org) or (800) 621-1773 ext. 8291.