

Healthcare industry – Best practices for descriptions

v1.9

Trade Item Description and associated descriptive attributes

In the National Product Catalogue the 'trade item description' is an important attribute and the cross industry best practice is to construct the description as follows:

'Brand' + 'Sub-brand' + 'Functional Name' + 'Variant' + 'Net Content' (where applicable).

A range of healthcare data recipients rely on accurate and consistent population of the descriptive attributes 'Brand', 'Sub-brand', 'Functional Name' and 'Variant' to provide unambiguous and full product descriptions. This allows the flexibility to use individual attributes or combinations of attributes for varied description and search function requirements.

Useful tips to ensure high quality descriptions

The standard definitions of these attributes can be found in the Data Dictionary (or 'Cookbook')

1. Brand Name: This is the brand name that the clinician would recognize the product by, or can be the name of the manufacturer, or it may be the Supplier Name
2. Sub-Brand: this component is often over-looked but is required when applicable. A Sub-Brand may be a registered trademark, and should not be entered in the Functional Name field. If we take the iPhone as an example, 'iPhone' should be the Sub-Brand (and 'Apple' the Brand), and 'Smartphone' the Functional Name; even though in common language we refer to this product as an 'iPhone', which might lead some people to thinking it is acceptable as the Functional Name.
3. Functional Name: is what the product is and how it is used. For example: a 'Dressing' could either be a 'Wound Dressing' or a 'Salad Dressing'. Use enough detail to avoid confusion. Keep in mind that your Functional Name should fit within 35 characters, and that you are not allowed to use abbreviations.

Please note that for medicines, the generic medication ingredient (or active ingredient) and strength should not be entered in the Functional Name but in the 'Medicine/Device Unit Name' attribute.

Functional Name for Medicine would be to describe what the medicine is used for – Pain Relief, Cardiac Antiarrhythmic, Diuretic, Anti-Hypertension - it is OK to use a medical term that is in common use

4. Variant: the variant field can contain multiple characteristics of an item, as well as abbreviations, with a maximum length of 35 characters. Example: a product that is Extra Large, coloured Dark-Blue, and is 55 mm long could have the following variant: 'XL Dark-Blue Length 55 mm'. Keep in mind that the Net Content of an item should not be entered in the Variant but in the 'Net Content' field. For example '100 ml' can't be the Variant of a syrup, but is instead the Net Content.

Additional Trade Item Description or Full Description - use these fields to describe the product in medical terminology language – you might have a Snowmed Description you can use here. The idea for these two fields is to allow the manufacturer or supplier to include more detail related to the product for better understanding of the product by the clinician

Example of a Bad Practice for creating a Trade Item Description

Data attribute	Example data	What's wrong?
Brand	Iris Scissors	This is not the brand.
Sub Brand	25 mm	This is unlikely to be a sub-brand.
Functional Name eg #1	Brando 25 mm	1. The brand should not be part of the functional name. 2. This does not imply what the product is or how it should be used
Functional Name eg #2	Medical Equipment	This is too general.
Variant eg #1	Scissors 3 Pack	1. This is unlikely to be a variant and seems too general (it seems like it should be part of the 'functional name'). 2. "3 Pack" is probably the 'net content' which should not be included within the variant.
Variant eg #2	To be used in conjunction with product Z33. Please dispose of carefully in Hazmat container.	This is too long and detailed for a variant. It seems more likely to be 'Additional Trade Item Description' data.
Net Content (1)	3 Pieces	"Pieces" is not a valid code. Use "EA" for a count.
Trade Item Description	Brndo Scissors 1 EA	1. Do not use abbreviations. "Brando" not "Brndo". 2. This is not descriptive enough. 3. If the net content is only one then omit "1 EA" from the end of the description

Example of a Good Practice for creating the Trade Item Description

Data attribute	Example data	
Brand	Brando	This is the brand of the product.
Sub Brand	Supalite	This a sub-brand associated with the “Brando” products and appears on the packaging. Note: Sub-brand can be left blank
Functional Name	Iris Scissors	1. This what the product is, with how/where it is used. 2. Note: “Scissors” is too general and could be confused with general office scissors
Variant	Sterile 25 mm Straight Blades	1. This is used to distinguish between similar products eg If there also exists a similar product with “Sterile 40 mm straight blades” then the variant is used to distinguish between the two. 2. Variant can be up to 500 characters long, however the Trade Item Description can only be a total of 200 characters 3. Note: Variant can left blank.
Net Content (1)	3 EA	1. There are 3 pairs of scissors in the pack.
Trade Item Description	Brando Supalite Iris Scissors Sterile 25 mm Straight Blades 3EA	This is a made by combining ‘Brand’ + ‘Sub Brand’ + ‘Functional Name’ + ‘Variant’ + ‘Net Content
Example Data Recipient ‘Custom’ Description	Iris Scissors Sterile 25 mm Straight Blades Brando Supalite 3 Pack	1. The data recipients can create a description, using these components, in their own format. 2. Currently this is: Functional Name + Variant + Brand + Sub-Brand + Net Content 3. “Pack” is human-readable description for Unit of Measure