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United States Adopted Names USAN Insider Newsletter



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The USAN application deadline for the December 2026 USAN Council meeting is October 23, 2026

Following review at the USAN Council meeting, most applicants can expect a response from the USAN Council before the deadline for the spring INN consultation.

USAN's NEW Application & Payment Submittal Portal

Please note, we no longer accept former USAN applications. All applicants must apply through the **USAN Application Portal**. The new portal allows you to submit applications, including all supporting documentation, and pay application fees online. Methods of payment will remain the same (wire and ACH only). Our overall goal is to modernize and improve the application submission experience. Please feel free to bookmark this URL for easy access: apply-usan.ama-assn.org.

If you have any questions as you begin to use the new portal or if you need an invite email, please do not hesitate to contact us at usanapp@ama-assn.org or USAN@ama-assn.org.

What Does the USAN Program Name?

The USAN Program names over 200 substances each year. We provide USAN designations for:

- Small-molecule drugs or chemical substances
- Biotechnology drugs including monoclonal antibodies, therapeutic vaccines, proteins and peptides, DNA, RNA, nucleoside, and nucleotide therapies
- Gene therapies
- Cellular therapies and related substances
- Other biological substances deemed appropriate to be assigned a USAN by the USAN Council
- Contact lens materials
- Active ingredients in sunscreens
- Veterinary products intended to control diseases in animals
- The base, salt, ester, or other chemical derivative of a substance that has received a USAN

Generally, the USAN Council declines to name the following substances:

- Mixtures that do not have an IND number or that do not require approval for human use by the FDA
- Bacterial strains
- Drug delivery mechanisms
- Excipients alone



USAN Website Links

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- Prophylactic vaccines intended to prevent illnesses (such as the COVID vaccine or the flu shot)
- Product formulations (emulsions, suspensions, etc.)
- Medical devices
- Manufacturing processes
- Combination drug products

Stems in Trade Names

USAN naming guidelines include the following statement: “By definition, nonproprietary names are not subject to proprietary trademark rights but are entirely in the public domain. This distinguishes them from the trademarked names that have been registered for private use.” Essentially, don’t put your USAN stem or entire USAN within your trade name.

Creating a trade name with nonproprietary name information not only inhibits the USAN Council’s work, but also inhibits the work of the international naming body, the INN Program. The nonproprietary name should be clearly distinguished from the trade name. The nonproprietary stem is a clue in the name that relays information about the compound and acts as a grouping for all compounds that are similar either chemically, in receptor affinity or by source if the substance is biologically derived. Now that database searches and Google hits are an important concern, nonproprietary stems within trade names can skew data and distort research.

When the USAN Council is considering a name, research is done to verify that the potential name is free from trade name conflicts. If a stem or entire USAN has been incorporated into a trade name, this would be a potential conflict, disrupting the timely and efficient application of a name, delaying the INN process, the adoption of your name, the use of your name in your publications and other communications, and publication of your USAN and distribution for dictionary publication. If, after adoption takes place, the USAN Program discovers a trade name has been registered which conflicts with the adopted name, we will defer publication until we receive notice that the trade name has been abandoned.

Guiding Principle #4 under Naming Guidelines states: “A name should be free from conflict with other nonproprietary names and with established trademarks and should be neither confusing nor misleading.” Further expansion on this statement is the “Protection of USAN and INN Stems” document, also in the website’s Naming Guidelines section. This document states:

With the growing number of USAN/INN and brand names, the possibility of conflicts between nonproprietary names, between trademarks, and between trademarks and nonproprietary names has increased significantly. A frequent source of conflict in the latter category is the practice of piggybacking on the USAN/INN, which is the incorporation of the official nomenclature stems, or clearly recognizable parts of stems, in the trademark. If trademark registration is obtained for names containing an officially reserved stem, the freedom of the USAN and the INN programs to select further nonproprietary names in the same series of substances is seriously diminished.



If the USAN Council has applied a new stem to your compound, this means that there is a possibility this stem could be used again for another substance later. If the stem conflicts with a trade name, it creates a fundamental problem for the USAN Council's work.

You, as a sponsor, must take on the responsibility to refrain from infringing on official drug nomenclature stems by using them in trade names.

Rounding Molecular Weights

When applying for an USAN, the Molecular weight should be given according to current guidelines for standard atomic weights of the elements by the IUPAC Commission on Atomic Weights and Isotopic Abundances. If no molecular weight can be calculated, this may be left blank, but approximate weights should be listed if they are known. For consistency, published USAN Adoption Statements illustrate molecular weights to tenths place only (not hundredths).

USAN First Policy

Per USAN Program policy, firms should apply for a non-proprietary drug name through their national nomenclature program first. In the United States of America, this national agency is the USAN Program. In addition to being policy, there are benefits associated with applying for a USAN before an INN.

Benefits of Applying for a USAN First:

1. The name (proposed USAN) that will be reviewed by the INN Committee is cleared by the USAN Council (USANC) with review from the FDA. The FDA can refer to detailed information about the drug substance through the IND number on file. Because of this vetting, names submitted to the INN Programme by USAN carry more weight and are more likely to be accepted by the INN Experts. Typically, less than 10% of USAN sponsored names submitted to the INN will need re-discussion at a future USANC meeting.
2. As part of USAN services, USAN staff will file the INN application and submit additional materials on USAN applicants' behalf at no additional fee (The INN application fee is \$12,000).
3. Less time is required to officially become an adopted USAN; USAN are adopted after the INN Expert meeting comment period expires and before the name appears in a published INN list.
4. Assistance from USAN staff in identifying the proper stem, suitable prefixes and name alternatives are offered at no extra charge and are included in the USAN application fee.
5. Free USAN staff assistance is available throughout the USAN and INN application process.
6. Continuous balloting by the USANC occurs throughout the year. Unlike INN review, USANC review is not limited to biannual meetings.



How is My Name Being Registered as an Internet Domain?

USAN and INN are in the public domain and cannot be owned. However, the same rule does not apply to Internet domain names. There are certain parties that will register USAN and any names under consideration without prior knowledge of the USAN Program or the applicant. Then, for a company to obtain the proper domain name later following the selection and adoption of USAN and INN, substantial fees are charged by the domain name owners. To combat this, USAN has started issuing notices in our correspondence to applicants and has posted the USAN Council's statement on domain names on the USAN web site, however it is still not illegal for USAN or names under consideration to be registered by unaffiliated third parties.

The USAN Program strongly recommends parking your "names under consideration" and USAN Council recommendations before they go to the INN. Internet sites such as godaddy.com or register.com will allow you to either park your name or determine if your name has been taken.

Publication Deferment Option

If you've come to adoption time and realize you are not ready for your statement to be published, there is an option. A publication deferment is a period after adoption takes place which will allow you further review time. You must request a publication deferment by the time your initial post adoption sixty-day review period is completed. USAN Program policy allows for a publication deferment of up to six months from the time that your proposed adoption statement revisions and completed review confirmation form are due. This means that you have up to eight months total to review your statement and submit proposed revisions to the USAN Program before publication takes place.

When the USAN Program is preparing to publish and there is no response from the sponsor when either the initial sixty-day period or the requested publication deferment period is up, the statement will be published as-is. If there are changes in the chemical information of your compound, or any other adoption statement items after the first round of revisions, the adoption statement must go through a USAN Revised application process (please see the Form D on the USAN Application Portal– apply-usan.ama-assn.org). Please email brad.wells@ama-assn.org to request a publication deferment and you will receive a rescheduling confirmation.

Tips for an INN Review

- Deadlines for all materials to be submitted to the INN Experts are about 2-3 months before the meeting. The INN deadlines are firm; they do not grant extensions.
- The USAN Program applies for an INN on behalf of the pharmaceutical firm. Consequently, firms requesting an INN through the USAN Program should route correspondence through the USAN program Secretariat.



- The name cannot be used as an INN until the INN Secretariat completes the publication process. After names are published as a pINN, there is a 4-month public comment period. If no objections are received, the name is published as a rINN. USAN Program staff will notify the firm of any pINN objections.
- US firms that have begun US clinical trials should file for the USAN first. International firms may choose to request either the USAN or the INN first. There is a misconception that filing for an INN first to make the deadlines for a specific INN meeting may allow a firm to obtain a USAN/INN more quickly. **This is not the case.** If the INN is requested before the USAN, we will not issue an adoption statement until after the pINN public comment period elapses.

Upcoming Events

- The 83rd Consultation (INN) Meeting: **October 12-15, 2026**
- USAN Council 2026 Winter Meeting: **December 4, 2026**

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About USAN

The purpose of the United States Adopted Names (USAN) Council is to serve the health professions of the United States by selecting simple, informative, and unique nonproprietary names for drugs by establishing logical nomenclature classifications based on pharmacological and/or chemical relationships.

The USAN Council is tri-sponsored by the American Medical Association (AMA), the United States Pharmacopeial Convention (USP) and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA). The USAN Council aims for global standardization and unification of drug nomenclature and related rules to ensure that drug information is communicated accurately and unambiguously. It works closely with the International Nonproprietary Name (INN) Program of the World Health Organization (WHO) and various national nomenclature groups.

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