Link Shortening

When a message is sent via Special Delivery containing a URL, the URL is shortened to reduce the total character length. This is important when sending via SMS because each message above 140 characters incurs additional charges.

Default OhMD Behavior

By default, URLs will be shortened to the domain `0h.md`[4]. Each shortened URL will forward to the link(s) specified in the `link` element specified in one of various message dispatching request bodies. No configuration is required for this behavior.

Custom Domain

Clients can also configure Special Delivery to use a domain name of their choice in shortened URLs. This is the recommended method as it may improve deliverability by using a domain already submitted to [The Campaign Registry](#). You will need to already own the domain you wish to use and have access to update your DNS (Domain Name Server) configuration. Your DNS administrator creates a CNAME (canonical name) entry pointing a new subdomain to `0h.md`. When completed, a DNS query should return something similar to:

```
;; global options: +cmd
;; Got answer:
;; ->>HEADER<<- opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 12884
;; flags: qr rd ra; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 2, AUTHORITY: 0, ADDITIONAL: 1

;; OPT PSEUDOSECTION:
; EDNS: version: 0, flags:; udp: 65494
;; QUESTION SECTION:
;l.example.com.                 IN   A

;; ANSWER SECTION:
l.example.com.         287  IN   CNAME   0h.md.
```

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[4] The first letter in the default domain is a zero.

OhMD recommends using the shortest subdomain possible (a single letter is preferred). This chart explains how a shortened URL may appear on a patient's phone when sent via Special Delivery:

Source URL	https://www.example.com/appointment_checkin&MRN=12345#startsection	
Shortened URL	Default OhMD Behavior	Custom DNS
	https://**0h.md**/j49sj0ti	https://**l.example.com**/j49sj0ti

Custom Domain Fallback Behavior

If OhMD detects DNS is misconfigured for a custom domain, the system will fallback to the default domain of `0h.md` for new URLs until the problem is fixed. Links already delivered **will not forward correctly**, so it's extremely important your organization's IT department maintains these DNS entries consistently and indefinitely to avoid outages.

Staff vs. Patient LInks

OhMD optionally allows you to present different URLs in messages sent to staff (visible in the app) vs. patients. This allows you to accurately identify clicks received from patients. To implement this, include different tracking parameters (a.k.a. UTMs) at the end of your URLs (Example: …`&staff=true`…) or use a distinct path to differentiate patients clicks from staff clicks.

Example snippet from dispatch request body that includes a link	```{ . . . "link": [{ "urlRecipient": "https://www.example.com/survey/", "urlStaff": "https://www.example.com/survey/?staff=true", "campaign": "Satisfaction Survey" }] . . . }```	← Organization employs its own click tracking and wishes to disambiguate staff clicks from patient clicks ← A campaign was specified for the link for click reporting.

Each of the two URLs will be shortened differently. Only patients will see their URLs and only staff will see theirs.

Source URL - Patient	https://www.example.com/appointment_checkin&MRN=12345#startpage	
Shortened URL	Default OhMD Behavior	Custom DNS
	https://**0h.md**/j49sj0ti	https://**l.example.com**/j49sj0ti

If a staff URL is not specified, staff and patient will receive different shortened URLs and OhMD provided click tracking will be differentiated, but they both will forward to the same target URL which may disrupt your internal click track.

All links must use https or your POST to the API will be rejected.

QR Codes

When a QR Code URL is sent in your POST, the actual URL will also shorten and be available for click tracking in the OhMD app or via API call.