

ATI Professional Nursing Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

- 1. Which information about living wills should a nurse include when educating new staff about advanced directives?**
 - A. Living wills require a written prescription from the provider to be legal**
 - B. Living wills allow the client to designate a healthcare proxy**
 - C. Legal wills ensure hospitals provide emergency care regardless of health coverage**
 - D. Living wills detail treatment wishes of the client in the event of terminal illness**
- 2. Which drainage tube is associated with an increased risk for hypokalemia?**
 - A. Nephrostomy tube to drainage bag**
 - B. Indwelling catheter to gravity**
 - C. Chest tube to water seal**
 - D. NG tube to suction**
- 3. Which statement reflects the importance of evidence-based practice in nursing care?**
 - A. It allows nurses to replace traditional methods**
 - B. It ensures nursing practices are based on the latest research**
 - C. It prioritizes time management over patient assessment**
 - D. It simplifies the decision-making process for nurses**
- 4. What is the appropriate action when administering benzocaine ear drops to a toddler?**
 - A. Place the child on the affected side after instillation**
 - B. Warm refrigerated drops to room temperature**
 - C. Pull the pinna upward and back during instillation**
 - D. Massage the area posterior to the ear**
- 5. What finding in a newborn delivered at 37 weeks requires further intervention?**
 - A. Vesicular rash**
 - B. Respiratory rate 54/min**
 - C. Abdominal distention**
 - D. Heart rate 142/min**

- 6. Which of the following is a characteristic of a mentor?**
- A. Formally assigned by the nurse manager**
 - B. Assists protégé in professional development**
 - C. Orients new graduates to a specific work environment**
 - D. Conducts annual performance evaluations**
- 7. What is necessary to legally change a client's code status to do-not-resuscitate (DNR)?**
- A. A written prescription from the provider**
 - B. Signed documentation from the client**
 - C. Family support of the decision**
 - D. Admission to hospice for palliative care**
- 8. Which statement by a new nurse manager shows a need for further education about new nurse orientation?**
- A. I should provide a brief orientation to allow for independent work right away.**
 - B. I will offer a residency program to ease transition to practice.**
 - C. I should assign a mentor to the newly licensed nurse.**
 - D. An extensive orientation isn't necessary.**
- 9. What statement best demonstrates assertiveness from a nurse who is uncomfortable with a client assignment?**
- A. I don't feel confident managing the client on my own**
 - B. You need to assign clients based on my skill level**
 - C. I'll still care for this client if you think I should**
 - D. I don't want to work with that client**
- 10. What common concern might a newly licensed nurse express to their preceptor regarding their new role?**
- A. I'm unsure about my ability to provide safe care**
 - B. I'm unhappy with my shift assignment**
 - C. I feel overwhelmed by paperwork**
 - D. I don't understand the electronic health record**

Answers

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1. D
2. D
3. B
4. B
5. C
6. B
7. A
8. A
9. A
10. A

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Explanations

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1. Which information about living wills should a nurse include when educating new staff about advanced directives?

A. Living wills require a written prescription from the provider to be legal

B. Living wills allow the client to designate a healthcare proxy

C. Legal wills ensure hospitals provide emergency care regardless of health coverage

D. Living wills detail treatment wishes of the client in the event of terminal illness

Living wills serve as a crucial component of advance directives, specifying a person's preferences regarding medical treatment in situations of terminal illness or irreversible conditions. These documents allow individuals to articulate their desires regarding life-sustaining measures, resuscitation, and other interventions when they are unable to communicate their choices. Patients use living wills to ensure that their treatment preferences are honored, providing clarity to healthcare providers and relieving loved ones from the burden of making difficult decisions. This process is pivotal in upholding patient autonomy and ensuring that care aligns with the individual's values and wishes at the end of life. The other options, while touching on aspects related to advance directives, do not accurately capture the primary function of a living will. For example, they may misconstrue the legal requirements for living wills, the role of a healthcare proxy, or the obligations of healthcare providers regarding emergency care. Understanding living wills is essential for new staff members who aim to support and respect patients' rights and treatment preferences within their care strategies.

2. Which drainage tube is associated with an increased risk for hypokalemia?

A. Nephrostomy tube to drainage bag

B. Indwelling catheter to gravity

C. Chest tube to water seal

D. NG tube to suction

The use of a nasogastric (NG) tube to suction can lead to an increased risk for hypokalemia due to the potential loss of potassium-rich gastric fluids. When suction is applied to an NG tube, it can remove not only the contents of the stomach but also electrolytes, including potassium. As gastric content is emptied, these essential electrolytes are lost, which can disrupt the body's normal balance and lead to hypokalemia. Hypokalemia can have several adverse effects on the body, including muscle weakness, fatigue, and potentially dangerous cardiac arrhythmias. As the body attempts to maintain potassium homeostasis while the NG tube continues to suction, it may deplete potassium levels further, especially if the patient is already at risk for electrolyte imbalances due to conditions such as vomiting or certain medications. In contrast, the other options provided do not typically contribute to hypokalemia in the same manner as an NG tube to suction. For example, nephrostomy tubes and indwelling catheters primarily deal with urinary output rather than gastrointestinal contents, and chest tubes generally focus on pleural drainage rather than electrolyte loss.

3. Which statement reflects the importance of evidence-based practice in nursing care?

- A. It allows nurses to replace traditional methods**
- B. It ensures nursing practices are based on the latest research**
- C. It prioritizes time management over patient assessment**
- D. It simplifies the decision-making process for nurses**

The statement highlighting the importance of evidence-based practice in nursing care emphasizes that practices are grounded in the latest research. This is crucial because it ensures that patient care is not only current but also effective, safe, and aligned with the best available evidence. Evidence-based practice integrates clinical expertise with the most recent research findings, enabling nurses to provide high-quality care that is scientifically validated. By utilizing research-backed information, nurses can make informed decisions that directly impact patient outcomes, leading to improved healthcare quality and enhanced patient safety.

4. What is the appropriate action when administering benzocaine ear drops to a toddler?

- A. Place the child on the affected side after instillation**
- B. Warm refrigerated drops to room temperature**
- C. Pull the pinna upward and back during instillation**
- D. Massage the area posterior to the ear**

When administering benzocaine ear drops to a toddler, warming the refrigerated drops to room temperature is crucial because this helps ensure the child's comfort during the procedure. Cold drops can cause discomfort or pain when instilled in the ear, leading to a negative experience that may create anxiety about future treatments. Warming the drops helps minimize the risk of causing any shock or discomfort to the sensitive ear structures, making the process smoother for both the child and the caregiver. Therefore, ensuring that the medication is at a comfortable temperature prior to administration is an essential nursing practice that can promote better patient compliance and a more positive healthcare experience. The other methods, while related to ear drop administration, do not prioritize the comfort aspect as directly as warming the drops does. Hence, properly preparing the medication temperature is a fundamental step in the administration process.

5. What finding in a newborn delivered at 37 weeks requires further intervention?

- A. Vesicular rash**
- B. Respiratory rate 54/min**
- C. Abdominal distention**
- D. Heart rate 142/min**

In a newborn delivered at 37 weeks, abdominal distention is a significant finding that requires further intervention. This symptom can indicate potential gastrointestinal issues, such as ileus, bowel obstruction, or other anomalies affecting the digestive tract. In newborns, especially those who are just transitioning to life outside the womb, any signs of abdominal distention can be serious because it may suggest that the intestines are not functioning properly or that there is an obstruction which can lead to significant complications if not addressed promptly. Other findings such as a vesicular rash could be benign or related to common neonatal conditions and may not indicate an immediate threat. A respiratory rate of 54 breaths per minute, while it is important to monitor, falls within the normal range for a newborn, as normal respiratory rates for infants can be between 30 to 60 breaths per minute. Likewise, a heart rate of 142 beats per minute is also within the expected normal range for a newborn, which typically ranges from 120 to 160 beats per minute. Thus, abdominal distention stands out as the most concerning finding that requires additional assessment and intervention.

6. Which of the following is a characteristic of a mentor?

- A. Formally assigned by the nurse manager**
- B. Assists protégé in professional development**
- C. Orients new graduates to a specific work environment**
- D. Conducts annual performance evaluations**

A characteristic of a mentor is that they assist their protégé in professional development. Mentorship involves a supportive relationship where a more experienced individual provides guidance, knowledge, and resources to help the mentee grow in their career. This development encompasses various aspects, including skill enhancement, career path planning, and navigating challenges within the profession. Mentors also play a crucial role in fostering confidence and personal growth, encouraging their protégés to seek opportunities and develop their potential. This relationship is often more informal than other professional interactions and is characterized by mutual respect and a shared commitment to the protégé's growth. In contrast, the other options represent roles or responsibilities that are typically more structured or administrative in nature. For instance, formal assignment by a nurse manager indicates an organizational role rather than a mentorship role. Orienting new graduates to a specific work environment is part of training and integration, rather than ongoing professional development guided by a mentor. Conducting annual performance evaluations is an evaluative function that reflects management responsibilities, not the supportive teaching and guiding nature of mentorship.

7. What is necessary to legally change a client's code status to do-not-resuscitate (DNR)?

- A. A written prescription from the provider**
- B. Signed documentation from the client**
- C. Family support of the decision**
- D. Admission to hospice for palliative care**

To legally change a client's code status to do-not-resuscitate (DNR), a written prescription from the provider is required. This prescription serves as a formal and legal directive that indicates the client's wishes regarding resuscitation efforts in the event of cardiac or respiratory arrest. It reflects the physician's assessment and understanding of the client's medical condition, prognosis, and the appropriateness of resuscitation attempts given the client's wishes. While signed documentation from the client may indicate their desire for a DNR status, it is the provider's written order that carries legal weight in a clinical setting. Family support, although important in discussions about palliative care and end-of-life decisions, is not legally binding on its own. Admission to hospice care may entail discussions about code status but does not automatically authorize a DNR status without the specific provider's order. Therefore, the key element to establishing a DNR code status legally is the necessity of the physician's written prescription.

8. Which statement by a new nurse manager shows a need for further education about new nurse orientation?

- A. I should provide a brief orientation to allow for independent work right away.**
- B. I will offer a residency program to ease transition to practice.**
- C. I should assign a mentor to the newly licensed nurse.**
- D. An extensive orientation isn't necessary.**

Providing a brief orientation to allow for independent work right away indicates a misunderstanding of the orientation process for new nurses. A strong orientation program is essential for ensuring that newly licensed nurses feel confident and competent in their new roles. Orientation serves to familiarize them with hospital policies, procedures, and the specific expectations of their positions. Transitioning to practice requires adequate time for new nurses to learn and apply their skills under guidance, not immediately thrusting them into independent work. It is crucial for new nurses to integrate and acclimatize themselves to their work environment, receive necessary training, and gradually build their confidence before taking on responsibilities independently. This approach helps reduce the risk of errors and promotes patient safety. The other statements reflect a proper understanding of new nurse orientation. Offering a residency program allows for a more extended period of support and development as new nurses transition into their roles. Assigning a mentor provides an additional layer of support, fostering both professional growth and a sense of belonging. Recognizing that an extensive orientation may indeed be necessary reflects an awareness of the complexities involved in nursing practice and the need for thorough preparation.

9. What statement best demonstrates assertiveness from a nurse who is uncomfortable with a client assignment?

- A. I don't feel confident managing the client on my own**
- B. You need to assign clients based on my skill level**
- C. I'll still care for this client if you think I should**
- D. I don't want to work with that client**

The statement "I don't feel confident managing the client on my own" demonstrates assertiveness because it effectively communicates the nurse's feelings and concerns regarding the assignment. This approach allows the nurse to express a legitimate concern about their ability to provide safe and effective care without being aggressive or confrontational. Assertiveness involves standing up for oneself while also maintaining respect for others. By articulating a specific feeling of lack of confidence, the nurse opens the door for a constructive dialogue with a supervisor or manager, which may lead to a reassessment of the assignment or additional support based on their assessed competency. In contrast, other options may reflect varying degrees of discomfort but do not effectively communicate assertiveness. For instance, asking for clients to be assigned according to skill level may come across as demanding rather than expressing a personal concern. Offering to care for a client despite reservations implies compliance rather than assertiveness, suggesting a lack of advocacy for the nurse's own needs. Expressing a simple refusal to work with a client signals discomfort but lacks the clarity needed to foster understanding and assistance.

10. What common concern might a newly licensed nurse express to their preceptor regarding their new role?

- A. I'm unsure about my ability to provide safe care**
- B. I'm unhappy with my shift assignment**
- C. I feel overwhelmed by paperwork**
- D. I don't understand the electronic health record**

A common concern for newly licensed nurses is uncertainty about their ability to provide safe care. This apprehension often stems from the transition from the educational setting, where students have the opportunity to practice under supervision, to the professional environment where they are responsible for the care of real patients. New nurses may doubt their clinical skills, decision-making abilities, and overall competence, fearing that they might make mistakes that could harm patients. This concern can be amplified by the high stakes involved in nursing practice, the complexity of patient care, and the rapid pace of real-world healthcare settings. While feeling overwhelmed by paperwork, dissatisfaction with shift assignments, and challenges with electronic health records are all valid concerns for new nurses, these issues do not typically evoke the same level of anxiety regarding patient safety. The focus on ensuring safe and effective patient care is a fundamental aspect of nursing, making it the primary concern for those just entering the profession.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://atiprofessionalnursing.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!