

# Care of the Surgical Patient Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

**This is a sample study guide. To access the full version with hundreds of questions,**

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**SAMPLE**

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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. Don't worry about getting everything right, 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, and take breaks to retain information better.**

## **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.**

## **7. Use Other Tools**

**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!**

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## **Questions**

- 1. What are the common postoperative complications associated with abdominal surgery?**
  - A. Headache, dizziness, and fatigue**
  - B. Infection, bleeding, and bowel obstruction**
  - C. Skin rash, fever, and nausea**
  - D. Joint pain, insomnia, and urinary retention**
- 2. What should a nurse monitor for when caring for a patient on a PCA pump?**
  - A. Signs of over-sedation or inadequate pain control**
  - B. Signs of dehydration**
  - C. Temperature fluctuations**
  - D. Heart rate variability**
- 3. Which of the following are signs of infection at a surgical site?**
  - A. Nausea and vomiting**
  - B. Pain and fever**
  - C. Redness, swelling, warmth, and drainage**
  - D. Headache and fatigue**
- 4. What are the potential consequences of a retained foreign object after surgery?**
  - A. Infection and obstruction**
  - B. Decreased blood flow**
  - C. Inability to move**
  - D. Cardiac arrest**
- 5. What is a common reason for increased postoperative pain management in older adults?**
  - A. Higher levels of anxiety during surgery**
  - B. Decreased physiological reserve and possible comorbidities**
  - C. They typically request less pain relief**
  - D. Age-related metabolism changes that lower medication efficacy**

- 6. How does patient understanding of discharge instructions affect recovery?**
- A. It generally has little impact**
  - B. It contributes to better adherence to postoperative care**
  - C. It can confuse the patient**
  - D. It is only important for older patients**
- 7. In the postoperative phase, what is the priority assessment for a surgical patient?**
- A. Monitoring airway patency and respiratory function**
  - B. Assessing pain levels regularly**
  - C. Checking wound healing progress**
  - D. Determining nausea levels**
- 8. What is the primary concern with excessive fluid intake in postoperative patients?**
- A. Infection risk**
  - B. Fluid overload leading to complications**
  - C. Hypotension**
  - D. Weight loss**
- 9. What is the primary purpose of the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU)?**
- A. To prepare patients for surgery**
  - B. To safely monitor and recover patients from anesthesia**
  - C. To provide long-term rehabilitation**
  - D. To educate patients about post-surgical care**
- 10. Which patient statement during a preoperative assessment should be reported to the charge nurse and surgeon?**
- A. "I have been taking an herbal product of feverfew for my migraines."**
  - B. "I exercise for 3 hours a day."**
  - C. "I drink 2 glasses of wine a day."**
  - D. "I use atropine eyedrops every day."**

## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What are the common postoperative complications associated with abdominal surgery?**

- A. Headache, dizziness, and fatigue**
- B. Infection, bleeding, and bowel obstruction**
- C. Skin rash, fever, and nausea**
- D. Joint pain, insomnia, and urinary retention**

Abdominal surgery can lead to a variety of complications, and the most common postoperative issues include infection, bleeding, and bowel obstruction. Infection can occur at the surgical site due to bacteria entering through the incision, and it's a prevalent complication that healthcare providers monitor closely postoperatively. Symptoms can include redness, swelling, and drainage at the wound site as well as fever. Bleeding can happen either externally or internally, and it may result from inadequate closure of blood vessels during the surgery or due to the physiological response of the body post-surgery. Monitoring vital signs and checking for any signs of increased drainage are critical in identifying any bleeding early. Bowel obstruction may arise due to adhesions, which are bands of scar tissue that can form from the surgical procedure. These adhesions can interfere with the normal motility of the intestines, preventing the passage of food and fluids. Symptoms typically include pain, distention, and absence of bowel movements. These complications are critical to recognize because they can significantly affect recovery and the overall outcome of the surgical procedure, necessitating prompt assessment and management. In contrast, the other choices list complications that are either less common in the context of abdominal surgery or not directly related to postoperative management in this specific

**2. What should a nurse monitor for when caring for a patient on a PCA pump?**

- A. Signs of over-sedation or inadequate pain control**
- B. Signs of dehydration**
- C. Temperature fluctuations**
- D. Heart rate variability**

Monitoring for signs of over-sedation or inadequate pain control is critical when caring for a patient on a Patient-Controlled Analgesia (PCA) pump. The primary purpose of a PCA is to allow the patient to manage their pain effectively by self-administering analgesics, typically opioids, within prescribed limits. Over-sedation can be a serious concern as it may lead to respiratory depression, which can be life-threatening. Consequently, it is important for nurses to assess the patient's level of sedation, consciousness, and respiratory status regularly. This ensures that the patient is receiving adequate pain relief without experiencing harmful side effects from the medication. Inadequate pain control must also be monitored, as the effectiveness of the PCA relies on the patient's ability to self-administer medication according to their needs. Ensuring the patient is comfortable and has sufficient pain relief is paramount for their recovery and overall well-being. The other options, while relevant in different contexts, are not the primary focus of monitoring when a patient is on a PCA pump. Dehydration management, temperature, and heart rate are important aspects of general patient care but do not directly pertain to the specific risks and management strategies associated with PCA use.

### 3. Which of the following are signs of infection at a surgical site?

- A. Nausea and vomiting
- B. Pain and fever
- C. Redness, swelling, warmth, and drainage**
- D. Headache and fatigue

The signs of infection at a surgical site typically include localized symptoms that indicate the body's response to an infectious agent. Redness, swelling, warmth, and drainage are all classic manifestations of inflammation and infection. When an infection occurs, the body's immune response leads to increased blood flow to the area, resulting in redness and warmth. This is accompanied by swelling due to the accumulation of fluids and immune cells in the tissue. Drainage, which can be purulent (pus-filled), indicates the presence of bacteria and the body working to expel the infection. These symptoms are significant because they not only indicate that an infection may be present, but they also provide diagnostic information about the severity and nature of the infection, guiding further evaluation and treatment. In contrast, the other options represent symptoms that are more general and may not specifically indicate an infection at the surgical site. Nausea, vomiting, headache, and fatigue can occur for various reasons unrelated to a local infection, such as anesthetic effects, medication reactions, or stress from the surgical procedure itself. Pain and fever may suggest infection but are not definitive without the localized signs of redness, swelling, warmth, and drainage, which directly indicate infection at the surgical site.

### 4. What are the potential consequences of a retained foreign object after surgery?

- A. Infection and obstruction**
- B. Decreased blood flow
- C. Inability to move
- D. Cardiac arrest

Retained foreign objects after surgery can lead to a variety of serious complications, with infection and obstruction being among the most significant. When a foreign object, such as a surgical sponge or instrument, remains in the body, it can facilitate the growth of bacteria, leading to an infection. This is particularly problematic in sterile environments, such as surgical sites where the risk of infection is already elevated. Furthermore, a retained object can cause physical obstruction in the gastrointestinal tract or other systems, which can result in severe pain, vomiting, and the inability to pass stools. This can escalate to a surgical emergency, requiring additional procedures to remove the object and manage any resulting complications. In this context, the other options, while potentially serious issues in different scenarios, are less directly related to retained foreign objects. Decreased blood flow, inability to move, and cardiac arrest are complications that can arise from various conditions or injuries but are not primarily associated with the immediate ramifications of leaving a foreign body inside a patient after surgery.

**5. What is a common reason for increased postoperative pain management in older adults?**

- A. Higher levels of anxiety during surgery**
- B. Decreased physiological reserve and possible comorbidities**
- C. They typically request less pain relief**
- D. Age-related metabolism changes that lower medication efficacy**

Increased postoperative pain management in older adults is often attributed to decreased physiological reserve and possible comorbidities. As individuals age, their bodies may not respond to surgical stress and recovery as efficiently as younger individuals due to several factors, including diminished organ function, frailty, and other pre-existing health conditions. These comorbidities can exacerbate pain perception and complicate recovery, necessitating a more tailored and potentially intensive approach to pain management post-surgery. Older adults may experience pain more acutely or have a reduced ability to cope with it because their physiological reserves—their body's ability to endure and recover from stress—are lower. This can lead to longer recovery times and increased pain management requirements to ensure comfort and promote healing. While anxiety levels during surgery and metabolism changes can play roles in the overall experience of pain and its management, the primary focus for increased postoperative pain management is rooted in the comprehensive health status and resilience of the older adult population. Additionally, older patients often have different pain thresholds and responses to pain medications, further necessitating individualized care plans.

**6. How does patient understanding of discharge instructions affect recovery?**

- A. It generally has little impact**
- B. It contributes to better adherence to postoperative care**
- C. It can confuse the patient**
- D. It is only important for older patients**

Patient understanding of discharge instructions plays a crucial role in their recovery after surgery. When patients fully comprehend the instructions they receive upon discharge, they are more likely to adhere to postoperative care protocols, such as taking medications on time, recognizing signs of complications, and following recommended lifestyle changes. This adherence is linked to improved health outcomes, reduced rates of readmission, and faster recovery times. Clear instructions help patients engage actively in their recovery process, empower them to take responsibility for their health, and reduce anxiety about self-care. Furthermore, when patients understand their discharge plan, they can communicate better with their healthcare providers about any concerns that arise, allowing for timely interventions if necessary. This aspect of understanding is essential not only for recovery but also for enhancing the overall effectiveness of surgical care. Other options do not capture the significance of patient understanding adequately. The notion that it has little impact undermines the critical role that patient engagement plays in recovery. Likewise, suggesting that it can confuse the patient misses the nuance of providing clear, tailored instructions. Finally, stating that the importance is only for older patients overlooks the fact that all patients, regardless of age, benefit from a clear understanding of their postoperative care.

**7. In the postoperative phase, what is the priority assessment for a surgical patient?**

**A. Monitoring airway patency and respiratory function**

**B. Assessing pain levels regularly**

**C. Checking wound healing progress**

**D. Determining nausea levels**

Monitoring airway patency and respiratory function is crucial in the postoperative phase because the effects of anesthesia can lead to respiratory depression or compromise. After surgery, patients may have altered consciousness and weakened respiratory muscles, making it essential to ensure that the airway is clear and that the patient is able to breathe effectively. Complications such as airway obstruction or inadequate ventilation can arise quickly and may lead to severe consequences if not promptly addressed. In contrast, while assessing pain levels, checking wound healing progress, and determining nausea levels are also important aspects of postoperative care, they are secondary to ensuring that the patient's respiratory system is functioning properly. A compromised airway can lead to critical situations that can rapidly turn life-threatening, thus prioritizing airway management and respiratory function is paramount in the immediate postoperative period.

**8. What is the primary concern with excessive fluid intake in postoperative patients?**

**A. Infection risk**

**B. Fluid overload leading to complications**

**C. Hypotension**

**D. Weight loss**

Excessive fluid intake in postoperative patients primarily raises concerns about fluid overload leading to complications. After surgery, the body may have a diminished capacity to handle additional fluids due to factors like altered kidney function, inflammation, or the body's stress response. When too much fluid is given, it can result in pulmonary edema, congestive heart failure, or even worsening of preexisting conditions such as hypertension or heart disease. Monitoring fluid intake is critical to balance adequate hydration while preventing these potentially dangerous complications. The other options, while significant in their own contexts, do not directly address the primary risk associated with excessive fluid intake. Infection risk can arise from various factors unrelated to fluid intake. Hypotension, often caused by inadequate fluid levels or other factors, is not typically a direct result of excessive fluid administration. Weight loss is generally not a concern in the immediate postoperative period, as the focus tends to be more on managing fluid balance rather than weight management.

**9. What is the primary purpose of the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU)?**

- A. To prepare patients for surgery**
- B. To safely monitor and recover patients from anesthesia**
- C. To provide long-term rehabilitation**
- D. To educate patients about post-surgical care**

The primary purpose of the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU) is to safely monitor and recover patients from anesthesia. After undergoing surgery, patients are transferred to the PACU where they are closely monitored as they regain consciousness and recover from the effects of anesthesia. This setting is critical for assessing vital signs, managing pain, monitoring for potential complications related to both the surgical procedure and the anesthesia, and ensuring that the patient is stable before being discharged to a more permanent care setting. The PACU focuses on short-term recovery and stabilization, which distinguishes it from other options that pertain to different stages of patient care. Preparing patients for surgery occurs in pre-operative settings, while long-term rehabilitation is managed in outpatient or rehabilitation facilities after leaving the PACU. Additionally, while education about post-surgical care is vital, it typically takes place later in the recovery process, outside of the immediate post-anesthesia phase.

**10. Which patient statement during a preoperative assessment should be reported to the charge nurse and surgeon?**

- A. "I have been taking an herbal product of feverfew for my migraines."**
- B. "I exercise for 3 hours a day."**
- C. "I drink 2 glasses of wine a day."**
- D. "I use atropine eyedrops every day."**

The statement regarding the use of feverfew, which is an herbal product taken for migraines, is particularly important to report to the charge nurse and surgeon during the preoperative assessment. Herbal products can have unique effects on surgical outcomes and recovery. Feverfew, specifically, is known to potentially increase the risk of bleeding due to its antiplatelet properties. This is especially significant in the context of surgery, where maintaining stable hemostasis is critical to avoid complications. Preoperative assessments aim to identify any substances that might interfere with planned surgical procedures or anesthesia. In contrast, the other statements, while they may reflect health-related habits, do not present immediate concerns related to surgical risks. Regular exercise and moderate alcohol consumption typically do not require intervention or reporting in a preoperative context. The use of atropine eyedrops, while noteworthy, might not carry the same level of immediate risk as the potential impact of feverfew on bleeding. Reporting the feverfew use ensures that the surgical team can take appropriate precautionary measures.

## 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](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

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

**<https://careofsurgicalpatient.examzify.com>**

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