Digestive System A&P Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide

Everything you need from our exam experts!

Sample study guide. For the full version with hundreds of questions, visit: https://digetivesysaandp.examzify.com

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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.

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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!

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Questions

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1. Which structure is the site of mechanical digestion and the start of carbohydrate digestion?

A. Mouth

B. Pharynx

C. Esophagus

D. Stomach

2. Which process moves nutrients from the digestive tract into the bloodstream?

A. Absorption

B. Ingestion

C. Secretion

D. Elimination

3. Which cells secrete pepsinogen, the inactive form of pepsin, in the stomach?

A. Parietal cells

B. Chief cells

C. Goblet cells

D. Salivary amylase

4. Which of the following terms best describes the bolus?

A. Bolus

B. Chyme

C. Bile

D. Mucus

5. What describes involuntary waves of muscle contraction that move food in one direction through the digestive system?

A. Peristalsis

B. Segmentation

C. Absorption

D. Digestion

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6. Which substance emulsifies fats during digestion?

A. Bile

B. HCl

C. Mucus

D. Amylase

7. Which serous membrane covers the abdominal organs?

A. Visceral peritoneum

B. Parietal peritoneum

C. Mesenteries

D. Haustra

8. What is the term for the act of chewing?

A. Mastication

B. Deglutition

C. Digestion

D. Absorption

9. Which structure is the muscular organ that assists with chewing and swallowing?

A. Tongue

B. Tonsils

C. Cecum

D. Pancreas

10. What term describes the movement of food from one organ to the next?

A. Digestion

B. Secretion

C. Propulsion

D. Absorption

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which structure is the site of mechanical digestion and the start of carbohydrate digestion?

A. Mouth

B. Pharynx

C. Esophagus

D. Stomach

The mouth performs both mechanical and chemical beginnings of digestion. Chewing breaks food into smaller pieces, increasing surface area for enzymes to act. At the same time, saliva from the salivary glands contains salivary amylase (ptyalin), which begins breaking down starches into simpler sugars. This combination—physical breakdown by teeth and initial carbohydrate digestion by an enzyme in saliva—happens here. The pharynx and esophagus mainly move food along with little to no digestion, and the stomach churns the food and digests proteins, but its acidic environment inactivates amylase, so carbohydrate digestion doesn't start there. Hence, the mouth is the site where both mechanical digestion and the start of carbohydrate digestion occur.

2. Which process moves nutrients from the digestive tract into the bloodstream?

A. Absorption

B. Ingestion

C. Secretion

D. Elimination

The main idea here is how nutrients actually cross from the gut into the body's circulation. Absorption is the process by which digested nutrients are taken up across the lining of the small intestine and into the bloodstream (and, for fats, into the lymphatic system first before joining the blood). Most nutrient absorption happens in the small intestine—especially the duodenum and jejunum—through various transport methods: some molecules diffuse directly, others use facilitated diffusion, and many require active transport, often linked to sodium gradients. Once inside the enterocytes, nutrients enter the capillaries in the villi and are carried via the hepatic portal vein to the liver for processing. Ingestion is simply taking in food, secretion is the release of digestive juices, and elimination is excretion of wastes. So the process described is absorption.

3. Which cells secrete pepsinogen, the inactive form of pepsin, in the stomach?

A. Parietal cells

B. Chief cells

C. Goblet cells

D. Salivary amylase

Chief cells in the stomach's gastric glands secrete pepsinogen, the inactive precursor to pepsin. This zymogen form protects the stomach lining from being digested. In the acidic environment created by parietal cells (which release HCl), pepsinogen is activated to pepsin, the enzyme that begins protein digestion. Goblet cells produce mucus to shield the stomach lining, parietal cells secrete acid and intrinsic factor, and salivary amylase comes from the salivary glands and works in the mouth, not in the stomach.

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4. Which of the following terms best describes the bolus?

A. Bolus

B. Chyme

C. Bile

D. Mucus

The bolus is the chewed, saliva-wetted mass of food that is ready to be swallowed. In the mouth, chewing and mixing with saliva form this lump, which then travels down the esophagus by peristaltic waves. It only becomes chyme once it mixes with gastric juice in the stomach, so chyme is the stomach's content after digestion begins. Bile is the liver's digestive fluid for fat emulsification, and mucus is a protective secretion lining the digestive tract. Therefore, the bolus is best described as the chewed, saliva-lubricated ball of food ready for swallowing.

5. What describes involuntary waves of muscle contraction that move food in one direction through the digestive system?

A. Peristalsis

B. Segmentation

C. Absorption

D. Digestion

Movement of food through the digestive tract via waves of muscle contraction is called peristalsis. These coordinated contractions of the smooth muscle in the GI wall create a traveling wave that pushes contents forward, from the esophagus toward the stomach and along the intestines, in one direction and without reversing. Segmentation mixes and chops the contents to improve enzyme contact and absorption, rather than pushing it forward. Digestion refers to breaking down food, and absorption is the uptake of nutrients after digestion. So the described one-directional propulsion of food is peristalsis.

6. Which substance emulsifies fats during digestion?

A. Bile

B. HCl

C. Mucus

D. Amylase

Emulsification of fats is the step that creates many small fat droplets so lipases can efficiently break them down. Bile does this in the small intestine. Its bile salts act as detergents with both hydrophobic and hydrophilic parts, coating large fat globules and stabilizing numerous tiny emulsion droplets. This dramatically increases the surface area available for pancreatic lipase to act, making fat digestion possible. Bile is made by the liver and stored in the gallbladder; when fatty chyme reaches the duodenum, hormones trigger the gallbladder to release bile. The bile salts also help form micelles to ferry fatty acids and monoglycerides to the intestinal lining for absorption. In contrast, hydrochloric acid works mainly in the stomach to denature proteins, mucus protects and lubricates the gut, and amylase digests carbohydrates, not fats.

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7. Which serous membrane covers the abdominal organs?

A. Visceral peritoneum

B. Parietal peritoneum

C. Mesenteries

D. Haustra

The main idea is how the peritoneum is organized in the abdomen. The layer that directly covers the surfaces of abdominal organs is the visceral peritoneum, a serous membrane that provides lubrication as organs move. In contrast, the parietal peritoneum lines the inner surface of the abdominal wall. Mesenteries are folds of peritoneum that attach organs to the wall and contain vessels and nerves, while haustra are pouch-like features of the colon. Therefore, the membrane covering the abdominal organs is the visceral peritoneum.

8. What is the term for the act of chewing?

A. Mastication

B. Deglutition

C. Digestion

D. Absorption

Chewing is the mechanical breakdown of food by the teeth and jaw muscles, called mastication. This step grinds food and mixes it with saliva to form a bolus and to increase the surface area for enzymes to act on. Deglutition is the swallowing process that moves the bolus from the mouth into the esophagus. Digestion refers to the chemical breakdown of food by enzymes and acids, mainly in the stomach and intestines. Absorption is the uptake of nutrients through the gut lining after digestion. So, the act of chewing is mastication.

9. Which structure is the muscular organ that assists with chewing and swallowing?

A. Tongue

B. Tonsils

C. Cecum

D. Pancreas

The tongue is the muscular organ that assists with chewing and swallowing. Its powerful intrinsic and extrinsic muscles let it move food around the mouth, press it between the teeth, and mix it with saliva to form a cohesive bolus. When chewing, the tongue positions and repositions food to aid grinding and mixing. As swallowing begins, the tongue contracts to push the bolus to the back of the mouth and into the pharynx, triggering the swallow reflex. The other structures don't perform this muscular action: tonsils are lymphoid tissue that help defend against infection, the cecum is a pouch at the start of the large intestine, and the pancreas is a gland that secretes digestive enzymes rather than a muscle involved in movement of food.

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10. What term describes the movement of food from one organ to the next?

A. Digestion

B. Secretion

C. Propulsion

D. Absorption

Propulsion is the movement of food along the digestive tract from one organ to the next, driven by coordinated smooth-muscle contractions known as peristalsis. This forward movement carries swallowed material from the esophagus into the stomach and, as it continues, through the intestines. It's the process that physically relocates content between organs, distinct from digestion (breaking down food), secretion (release of digestive fluids), and absorption (nutrients entering the bloodstream). While mixing motions like segmentation help with digestion in the intestines, the primary role of propulsion is to push the material onward to the next organ.

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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://digetivesysaandp.examzify.com

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

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