

Fundamentals of Nursing - Vital Signs 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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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. Which condition is indicated by a pulse oximetry reading below 90%?**
 - A. Hyperventilation**
 - B. Hypoxemia**
 - C. Hypotension**
 - D. Dehydration**
- 2. What is the proper method for taking a pulse?**
 - A. Palpate the pulse for a full minute or count for 30 seconds and multiply by two**
 - B. Count for 15 seconds and add 15**
 - C. Use a stethoscope for the entire duration**
 - D. Measure only when the patient is at rest**
- 3. What is a common clinical term for abnormally fast breathing rates?**
 - A. Apnea**
 - B. Tachypnea**
 - C. Dyspnea**
 - D. Eupnea**
- 4. Normal adult heart rate is typically considered to be between?**
 - A. 60-100 bpm**
 - B. 50-80 bpm**
 - C. 70-110 bpm**
 - D. 80-120 bpm**
- 5. What does pulse rhythm indicate?**
 - A. Heart's electrical activity**
 - B. The pattern of beats and intervals**
 - C. Rate of blood flow**
 - D. Blood pressure stability**

- 6. Which temperature is indicative of hyperpyrexia?**
- A. 100.4°F**
 - B. 104.0°F**
 - C. 105.8°F**
 - D. 108.6°F**
- 7. What does "febrile" indicate about a patient's condition?**
- A. Without fever**
 - B. With fever**
 - C. Normal temperature**
 - D. Low body temperature**
- 8. What does the basal metabolic rate (BMR) represent?**
- A. Rate of energy utilization in the body required for activity**
 - B. Amount of blood pumped by the heart**
 - C. Rate of oxygen consumption in tissues**
 - D. Volume of fluids ingested by an individual**
- 9. What does a temperature of 100.4°F typically indicate?**
- A. It indicates the presence of a fever**
 - B. It indicates hypothermia**
 - C. It indicates normal body temperature**
 - D. It indicates a cold**
- 10. What does a "silent" blood pressure cuff indicate?**
- A. The cuff may not be inflated properly or the stethoscope might be improperly positioned**
 - B. The patient is in shock**
 - C. The blood pressure is too low**
 - D. The cuff is too large**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which condition is indicated by a pulse oximetry reading below 90%?

- A. Hyperventilation**
- B. Hypoxemia**
- C. Hypotension**
- D. Dehydration**

A pulse oximetry reading below 90% indicates hypoxemia, which is a condition characterized by abnormally low levels of oxygen in the blood. Normal oxygen saturation levels typically range from 95% to 100%. When levels fall below 90%, it suggests that the body is not receiving sufficient oxygen, potentially leading to tissue hypoxia. This can result from various respiratory or cardiovascular issues, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), pneumonia, or pulmonary embolism, among others. Recognition of hypoxemia is critical in nursing practice, as it often requires prompt assessment and intervention to prevent further complications. Monitoring pulse oximetry can provide valuable information about a patient's respiratory status and guide treatment decisions.

2. What is the proper method for taking a pulse?

- A. Palpate the pulse for a full minute or count for 30 seconds and multiply by two**
- B. Count for 15 seconds and add 15**
- C. Use a stethoscope for the entire duration**
- D. Measure only when the patient is at rest**

The correct method for taking a pulse involves palpating the pulse thoroughly to ensure accuracy. Counting the pulse for a full minute provides the most reliable reading, as it captures any fluctuations in the heart rate over a complete cycle. Alternatively, counting for 30 seconds and multiplying the result by two is also acceptable, provided that the pulse is regular and consistent during that time interval. This approach allows for a balance between time efficiency and accuracy in assessing the heart rate. In contrast, counting for just 15 seconds and adding to that total does not produce a sufficiently accurate measurement, especially if the pulse is irregular. While using a stethoscope can be beneficial, it is generally more common for the initial assessment of the pulse to be done through palpation rather than using the stethoscope for the entire duration. Lastly, measuring the pulse only when the patient is at rest may not reflect their normal heart rate during activity or stress, which can be important for a comprehensive health assessment.

3. What is a common clinical term for abnormally fast breathing rates?

- A. Apnea**
- B. Tachypnea**
- C. Dyspnea**
- D. Eupnea**

Tachypnea is the correct term used to describe abnormally fast breathing rates. It is characterized by an increased respiratory rate, typically defined as more than 20 breaths per minute in adults. Tachypnea can be a physiological response to various conditions, such as fever, anxiety, or respiratory illnesses, as the body attempts to increase oxygen intake and eliminate carbon dioxide more effectively. Recognizing tachypnea is important for healthcare providers as it can indicate underlying health issues that may require further assessment and intervention. In contrast, apnea refers to the absence of breathing, which is not relevant in this context. Dyspnea describes a subjective feeling of shortness of breath or difficulty breathing rather than the rate of breathing itself. Eupnea denotes normal, unlabored breathing, further differentiating it from the excessive breathing rate characteristic of tachypnea. Understanding these terms is essential for evaluating a patient's respiratory status in a clinical setting.

4. Normal adult heart rate is typically considered to be between?

- A. 60-100 bpm**
- B. 50-80 bpm**
- C. 70-110 bpm**
- D. 80-120 bpm**

The typical normal adult heart rate ranges from 60 to 100 beats per minute (bpm). This range is generally accepted in clinical practice and reflects the heart's efficiency at pumping blood throughout the body. A heart rate within this range indicates proper cardiovascular function at rest for most adults. Rates below 60 bpm are often classified as bradycardia, while rates above 100 bpm are considered tachycardia. Various factors, such as age, fitness level, and overall health, can influence an individual's resting heart rate, but for the general adult population, 60 to 100 bpm is the standard reference range used by healthcare professionals.

5. What does pulse rhythm indicate?

- A. Heart's electrical activity
- B. The pattern of beats and intervals**
- C. Rate of blood flow
- D. Blood pressure stability

The correct response highlights that pulse rhythm pertains to the pattern of beats and intervals of the heartbeat. The rhythm of the pulse can be described as regular or irregular, reflecting the systematic or unpredictable nature of heartbeats. Assessing pulse rhythm is crucial, as it provides insight into the heart's overall function and efficiency. Regular rhythms indicate a consistent interval between heartbeats, which typically suggests that the heart is functioning normally. Conversely, an irregular rhythm might signal various healthcare concerns, from arrhythmias to other cardiovascular conditions requiring further evaluation. While other factors such as the heart's electrical activity, the rate of blood flow, and blood pressure stability are significant in understanding cardiovascular health, they do not specifically define the concept of rhythm in the context of a pulse. Thus, it is the pattern and timing of beats that characterize pulse rhythm.

6. Which temperature is indicative of hyperpyrexia?

- A. 100.4°F
- B. 104.0°F
- C. 105.8°F**
- D. 108.6°F

The temperature indicative of hyperpyrexia is typically considered to be 105.8°F or higher. Hyperpyrexia refers to an extremely high fever, often defined as a body temperature exceeding 106°F (41.1°C). This condition can be life-threatening and may result from various causes, such as infections, heatstroke, or conditions affecting the hypothalamic temperature regulation center. While other temperatures listed may indicate a fever, they do not reach the threshold necessary to classify as hyperpyrexia. For example, 100.4°F is just slightly above normal and commonly associated with low-grade fever. A temperature of 104.0°F indicates a higher, but still moderate, fever that would require monitoring and potential intervention but does not reach hyperpyrexia levels. Even at 108.6°F, while it does suggest a dangerously high temperature, it is an extreme concern only when sustained and typically recognized as a medical emergency. However, the most recognized temperature that defines hyperpyrexia in medical contexts is 105.8°F.

7. What does "febrile" indicate about a patient's condition?

- A. Without fever
- B. With fever**
- C. Normal temperature
- D. Low body temperature

The term "febrile" specifically refers to a state in which a person has a fever. This condition is often characterized by an elevation in body temperature, usually above the normal range, as a response to infection or inflammation in the body. When a patient is described as febrile, it indicates that their body temperature is elevated, which can be an important sign for nurses and healthcare providers in diagnosing and managing illnesses. Recognizing a febrile state helps guide treatment decisions and interventions. In contrast, the other options describe conditions that do not relate to fever, such as being without fever, having a normal temperature, or having a low body temperature.

8. What does the basal metabolic rate (BMR) represent?

- A. Rate of energy utilization in the body required for activity**
- B. Amount of blood pumped by the heart
- C. Rate of oxygen consumption in tissues
- D. Volume of fluids ingested by an individual

The basal metabolic rate (BMR) represents the rate at which energy is utilized in the body at rest to maintain essential physiological functions. This includes processes such as breathing, circulation, cellular production, and thermoregulation. BMR reflects the minimum energy requirement needed to sustain life when an individual is in a state of rest and has not consumed food for several hours. This is distinct from other options provided. The amount of blood pumped by the heart pertains to cardiac output, which is a measure of the heart's performance and is not related to the energy expenditure at rest. The rate of oxygen consumption in tissues relates to metabolic demands during activity, rather than the basal state. Finally, the volume of fluids ingested by an individual does not directly correlate with metabolic rate or energy expenditure.

9. What does a temperature of 100.4°F typically indicate?

- A. It indicates the presence of a fever**
- B. It indicates hypothermia
- C. It indicates normal body temperature
- D. It indicates a cold

A temperature of 100.4°F is generally recognized as a low-grade fever. Normal body temperature typically ranges from about 97°F to 98.6°F, with some variability depending on the individual and the time of day. When body temperature exceeds the normal range, it often indicates that the body is responding to an underlying condition, such as an infection or illness, as part of the immune response. A fever can be part of the body's defense mechanism, signaling that the immune system is working to fight off pathogens. In the context of the other choices, hypothermia would refer to significantly lower body temperatures, which is not the case here. Normal body temperature is not represented by 100.4°F, as it implies a deviation from the typical range. Similarly, while a cold can lead to an increase in temperature, it does not specifically indicate the presence of a fever on its own. Therefore, a temperature of 100.4°F is a clear indicator of a fever.

10. What does a "silent" blood pressure cuff indicate?

- A. The cuff may not be inflated properly or the stethoscope might be improperly positioned**
- B. The patient is in shock**
- C. The blood pressure is too low**
- D. The cuff is too large**

A "silent" blood pressure cuff typically indicates that there may be an issue with how the cuff is functioning or how the measurements are being taken. If the cuff is not inflated properly, it might not exert the required pressure to compress the artery adequately, which can prevent the detection of blood flow sounds. Additionally, if the stethoscope is not positioned correctly over the brachial artery, the sound waves produced by the blood flow might not be heard, leading to a "silent" reading. When taking blood pressure, it is essential that both the equipment and technique are optimal. This ensures accurate readings. Factors such as cuff size relative to arm circumference can influence measurements, but a "silent" cuff specifically points towards issues with inflation or placement, rather than conditions like shock or low blood pressure, which wouldn't cause silence in the cuff itself.

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://fundofnursingvitalsigns.examzify.com>

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