

# Hospital Corpsman Basic (HCB) Test 5 Practice (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

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- 1. What condition is characterized by pain in the chest due to reduced blood supply to the heart?**
  - A. Heart failure**
  - B. Angina pectoris**
  - C. Myocardial infarction**
  - D. Arrhythmia**
  
- 2. What is the primary function of a valve in the circulatory system?**
  - A. To increase blood pressure**
  - B. To open and close for fluid flow control**
  - C. To produce red blood cells**
  - D. To regulate heart rate**
  
- 3. What size is labeled as a standard IV catheter for most adult procedures?**
  - A. 20**
  - B. 22**
  - C. 24**
  - D. 26**
  
- 4. What is the function of the endocardium in the heart?**
  - A. Provides a protective outer layer**
  - B. Offers a smooth lining for the heart chambers**
  - C. Regulates the contraction of heart muscles**
  - D. Separates the two sides of the heart**
  
- 5. Which term describes the complete stop of normal heartbeat and circulation?**
  - A. Heart attack**
  - B. Cardiac arrest**
  - C. Arrhythmia**
  - D. Angina**

- 6. What type of shock is most commonly seen by corpsmen?**
- A. Cardiogenic shock**
  - B. Hypovolemic shock**
  - C. Septic shock**
  - D. Anaphylactic shock**
- 7. Which artery supplies the major blood flow to the leg?**
- A. Popliteal artery**
  - B. Brachial artery**
  - C. Aorta**
  - D. Femoral artery**
- 8. Which pulse is NOT classified as a central pulse?**
- A. Carotid pulse**
  - B. Femoral pulse**
  - C. Radial pulse**
  - D. None of the above**
- 9. What is the main cause of angina pectoris?**
- A. Allergic reaction**
  - B. Low blood sugar**
  - C. Reduced blood supply to the heart**
  - D. High blood pressure**
- 10. Which of the following chambers receives deoxygenated blood?**
- A. Left atrium**
  - B. Right atrium**
  - C. Left ventricle**
  - D. Right ventricle**

## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What condition is characterized by pain in the chest due to reduced blood supply to the heart?**

- A. Heart failure**
- B. Angina pectoris**
- C. Myocardial infarction**
- D. Arrhythmia**

Angina pectoris is the correct answer because it specifically refers to the chest pain or discomfort that arises when the heart muscle does not receive sufficient blood flow, typically due to narrowed coronary arteries. This condition often occurs during physical exertion or stress when the heart demands more oxygen than the narrowed arteries can supply. The pain can be described as a feeling of pressure or squeezing in the chest, and it usually subsides with rest or medication that improves blood flow. In contrast, heart failure refers to the heart's inability to pump blood effectively, which may lead to a range of symptoms but is not exclusively characterized by chest pain from inadequate blood supply. Myocardial infarction, or a heart attack, involves the death of heart muscle tissue due to a prolonged lack of blood supply, often presenting with more intense and persistent chest pain. Arrhythmia consists of abnormal heart rhythms, which might cause symptoms like palpitations or dizziness but is not characterized by chest pain linked to blood supply issues. Therefore, angina pectoris is distinctly marked by the transitory nature of chest pain resulting from oxygen deprivation to the heart.

**2. What is the primary function of a valve in the circulatory system?**

- A. To increase blood pressure**
- B. To open and close for fluid flow control**
- C. To produce red blood cells**
- D. To regulate heart rate**

The primary function of a valve in the circulatory system is to open and close for fluid flow control. Valves are essential components that ensure the unidirectional flow of blood through the heart and blood vessels. They prevent backflow, allowing blood to efficiently move from one chamber of the heart to the next, or from the heart into the arteries. When a valve opens, it allows blood to pass through; when it closes, it prevents the blood from returning. This function is crucial for maintaining proper circulation and ensuring that oxygen-rich blood reaches the tissues while deoxygenated blood returns to the heart for re-oxygenation. In contrast to the correct function of valves, increasing blood pressure involves the contraction of the heart and resistance within blood vessels, which is not a direct role of the valves themselves. The production of red blood cells occurs primarily in the bone marrow and is unrelated to the function of valves. Likewise, regulating heart rate is managed by the heart's electrical conduction system, not the valves. Thus, valves play a specific and vital role in controlling blood flow rather than influencing blood pressure, blood cell production, or heart rate directly.

**3. What size is labeled as a standard IV catheter for most adult procedures?**

- A. 20**
- B. 22**
- C. 24**
- D. 26**

The standard IV catheter size for most adult procedures is typically labeled as 20 gauge. This size strikes a balance between flow rate and vessel trauma considerations, making it versatile for a variety of intravenous therapies and procedures. A 20-gauge catheter provides adequate flow for fluid replacement and medication administration, which is crucial in emergency situations or when larger volumes need to be delivered. Additionally, it's important to consider that while other sizes like 22 and 24 gauge are used, particularly in smaller veins or for more delicate populations, they may not provide the same flow rates as a 20 gauge. A 26 gauge would be even smaller and generally reserved for pediatric or very specific scenarios, emphasizing why the 20 gauge is the most commonly used size in adult patient care.

**4. What is the function of the endocardium in the heart?**

- A. Provides a protective outer layer**
- B. Offers a smooth lining for the heart chambers**
- C. Regulates the contraction of heart muscles**
- D. Separates the two sides of the heart**

The endocardium serves as a smooth lining for the heart chambers, which plays a crucial role in facilitating the unobstructed flow of blood through the heart. This inner layer of the heart's structure is composed of endothelial cells, which help minimize friction as blood flows from the atria to the ventricles and out to the arteries. By providing a smooth surface, the endocardium not only aids in efficient blood flow but also contributes to the overall health of the heart by reducing the risk of blood clot formation and maintaining proper function of heart valves. The other options refer to different structures or functions within the heart: the outer layer of the heart is covered by the epicardium, while cardiac muscle contractions are regulated by specialized conduction tissue rather than the endocardium itself. The separation of the heart's chambers is accomplished by the septum, not by the endocardium. Therefore, identifying that the endocardium's primary role is to provide this smooth lining is essential for understanding how the heart functions effectively.

**5. Which term describes the complete stop of normal heartbeat and circulation?**

- A. Heart attack**
- B. Cardiac arrest**
- C. Arrhythmia**
- D. Angina**

The term that describes the complete stop of normal heartbeat and circulation is cardiac arrest. During cardiac arrest, the heart stops beating effectively, which halts blood flow to the body's organs. This is a critical emergency that requires immediate intervention, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), to restore normal heart function and circulation. In contrast, a heart attack refers to a situation where blood flow to a part of the heart is blocked, often due to a clot. While a heart attack can lead to cardiac arrest, it is not the same as the complete cessation of heart activity. Arrhythmia refers to abnormal heart rhythms, which may include heartbeats that are too fast, too slow, or irregular. While some types of arrhythmias can lead to cardiac arrest, they do not signify a complete halt of the heartbeat. Angina is a condition characterized by chest pain or discomfort that results from inadequate blood flow to the heart muscle, typically as a result of coronary artery disease. Angina indicates that there are issues with blood supply but does not imply that the heart has stopped beating entirely. Thus, cardiac arrest aptly describes the critical condition where both the heartbeat and circulation cease

**6. What type of shock is most commonly seen by corpsmen?**

- A. Cardiogenic shock**
- B. Hypovolemic shock**
- C. Septic shock**
- D. Anaphylactic shock**

Hypovolemic shock is considered the most commonly seen type of shock by corpsmen due to its direct association with fluid loss in situations like trauma, hemorrhaging, or severe dehydration. In the field, especially in combat or emergency scenarios, patients often present with injuries that result in significant blood loss, leading to a decrease in the circulating blood volume. This condition causes inadequate perfusion of tissues and organs, which can quickly become life-threatening if not addressed. Corpsmen are typically in situations where they need to manage traumatic injuries, making hypovolemic shock a frequent occurrence they encounter. Understanding the signs and symptoms of hypovolemic shock, along with the appropriate interventions, is critical for corpsmen to stabilize patients effectively before they can receive advanced medical care.

**7. Which artery supplies the major blood flow to the leg?**

- A. Popliteal artery**
- B. Brachial artery**
- C. Aorta**
- D. Femoral artery**

The femoral artery is the primary vessel that supplies blood flow to the leg. Emerging from the external iliac artery, it travels down the thigh and branches into the popliteal artery at the back of the knee. This artery is crucial because it provides oxygenated blood to the muscles and tissues of the thigh, as well as to the lower leg and foot through its branching arteries. The other options pertain to different anatomical regions or functions. The popliteal artery is a continuation of the femoral artery and supplies blood to the knee and lower leg, but it does not supply the major blood flow to the leg as a whole. The brachial artery is responsible for blood flow to the arm, and the aorta is the main artery of the body supplying blood to the systemic circulation, but it is not specific to the leg. Thus, the femoral artery's role as the main supply line to the leg makes it the correct choice in this context.

**8. Which pulse is NOT classified as a central pulse?**

- A. Carotid pulse**
- B. Femoral pulse**
- C. Radial pulse**
- D. None of the above**

The radial pulse is not classified as a central pulse because it is located at the wrist, away from the body's core. Central pulses refer to those that are closer to the heart and provide a more direct indication of cardiac output and the body's systemic circulation. The carotid pulse, found in the neck, and the femoral pulse, located in the groin, both qualify as central pulses because they are positioned nearer to the aorta and directly reflect the central circulation. In contrast, the radial pulse is often used for routine checks because of its accessibility but does not provide as immediate a reflection of the heart's pumping capacity as the central pulses do.

**9. What is the main cause of angina pectoris?**

- A. Allergic reaction**
- B. Low blood sugar**
- C. Reduced blood supply to the heart**
- D. High blood pressure**

The main cause of angina pectoris is reduced blood supply to the heart. This condition occurs when the heart muscle does not receive enough oxygen-rich blood, usually due to narrowing or blockage of the coronary arteries. This lack of adequate blood flow can result from atherosclerosis, where plaques build up in the arteries, or from other conditions that affect blood circulation. When the heart's demand for oxygen increases during activities such as exercise or stress, the insufficient blood supply can lead to chest pain or discomfort, which is characterized as angina. Understanding that angina is primarily linked to insufficient blood supply helps in recognizing the importance of cardiovascular health and the need for identifying risk factors that might contribute to coronary artery disease.

**10. Which of the following chambers receives deoxygenated blood?**

**A. Left atrium**

**B. Right atrium**

**C. Left ventricle**

**D. Right ventricle**

The right atrium is the chamber of the heart that receives deoxygenated blood returning from the body. It collects blood through two major veins: the superior vena cava, which brings blood from the upper parts of the body, and the inferior vena cava, which carries blood from the lower parts. This chamber is crucial in the circulatory process as it serves as the entry point for blood that is low in oxygen and high in carbon dioxide, having been used by the body's tissues. Once the right atrium fills, it contracts to push this deoxygenated blood into the right ventricle, which then pumps it to the lungs for oxygenation. In contrast, the left atrium receives oxygen-rich blood from the lungs, the left ventricle pumps oxygenated blood to the body, and the right ventricle sends deoxygenated blood to the lungs. Understanding the role of the right atrium is fundamental in grasping the overall function of the heart and the circulatory system.

## 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://hcb5.examzify.com>**

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