

Maryland Geriatric Nursing Aide (GNA) 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

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- 1. Senses and interprets information from outside the body. Which body system is this?**
 - A. Nervous system**
 - B. Endocrine system**
 - C. Circulatory system**
 - D. Digestive system**

- 2. How do you properly apply a blood pressure cuff?**
 - A. Stand and take BP with arm dangling at side.**
 - B. Place cuff over clothing and inflate without palpating pulse.**
 - C. Use the smallest cuff possible to fit.**
 - D. Seated with arm supported at heart level, appropriate cuff size, place cuff over bare or allowed arm, palpate brachial pulse, inflate, and record reading.**

- 3. Which sign of poor oral health is described as breath that smells bad or fruity?**
 - A. Breath that Smells Minty**
 - B. Breath that Smells Like Flowers**
 - C. Breath is Neutral**
 - D. Breath that Smells Bad or Fruity**

- 4. Identify two signs of dehydration in an older adult.**
 - A. Dry mouth and decreased urine output.**
 - B. Increased appetite and energy.**
 - C. Red face and high blood pressure.**
 - D. Tearing eyes and increased saliva.**

- 5. What is the appropriate action if you observe a violation of a resident's rights?**
 - A. Address the issue directly with the resident.**
 - B. Record the violation but ignore it.**
 - C. Report violations to the appropriate supervisor and follow facility policy.**
 - D. Wait for the next inspection to address it.**

- 6. What is the initial objective when beginning a job search?**
- A. To find a job**
 - B. To obtain training**
 - C. To prepare a résumé**
 - D. To network informally**
- 7. Which condition describes not having enough fluid in the body?**
- A. Hyperhydration**
 - B. Electrolyte imbalance**
 - C. Dehydration**
 - D. Anemia**
- 8. How should a GNA handle questions about medical advice?**
- A. Provide medical advice within your scope.**
 - B. Acknowledge, redirect to licensed staff, and avoid giving medical advice beyond your role.**
 - C. Ignore the question.**
 - D. Advise the resident to self-prescribe medication.**
- 9. What should you do when a resident refuses a meal?**
- A. Ignore and proceed with service.**
 - B. Force feed after all.**
 - C. Respect decision, document refusal, offer alternatives, and notify the nurse.**
 - D. Delay documentation until later.**
- 10. Which position involves lying on the left side with one leg bent up?**
- A. Sims Position**
 - B. Supine Position**
 - C. Prone Position**
 - D. Fowler's Position**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Senses and interprets information from outside the body. Which body system is this?

- A. Nervous system**
- B. Endocrine system**
- C. Circulatory system**
- D. Digestive system**

Sensing and interpreting information from outside the body is the job of the nervous system. Sensory receptors in the skin, eyes, ears, nose, and tongue detect external stimuli and send signals to the brain and spinal cord, where the information is interpreted and an appropriate response is coordinated (like recognizing a hot surface and pulling your hand away). The endocrine system uses hormones to regulate body processes but doesn't provide the immediate sense-and-interpret input. The circulatory system transports substances; the digestive system breaks down food. So the nervous system is responsible for both sensing external information and interpreting it to guide action.

2. How do you properly apply a blood pressure cuff?

- A. Stand and take BP with arm dangling at side.**
- B. Place cuff over clothing and inflate without palpating pulse.**
- C. Use the smallest cuff possible to fit.**
- D. Seated with arm supported at heart level, appropriate cuff size, place cuff over bare or allowed arm, palpate brachial pulse, inflate, and record reading.**

The main idea is to apply the cuff in a way that gives an accurate blood pressure reading. Do it with the person seated and the arm supported at heart level, using a cuff that fits the arm properly. Place the cuff on a bare upper arm (or as allowed), center it over the brachial artery, and first palpate the brachial pulse to locate the artery. Then inflate the cuff and take the reading. This approach reduces errors caused by arm position, clothing, and an ill-fitting cuff. Standing with the arm dangling can change the reading because the arm isn't supported at heart level and muscle tension can affect circulation. Placing the cuff over clothing or inflating without locating the pulse can prevent a proper seal and misplace the cuff, leading to inaccurate results. Using the smallest cuff possible can crush the arm and falsely raise the reading.

3. Which sign of poor oral health is described as breath that smells bad or fruity?

- A. Breath that Smells Minty**
- B. Breath that Smells Like Flowers**
- C. Breath is Neutral**
- D. Breath that Smells Bad or Fruity**

Breath odor is a practical clue about oral health. When breath smells bad, it often points to oral issues like plaque buildup, tooth decay, gum disease, or dry mouth from inadequate oral care. Only the description that breath smells bad or fruity conveys an abnormal odor that would signal a problem needing attention. Minty or floral breath usually comes from mouthwash or scented products and does not indicate poor oral health, while neutral breath suggests no noticeable odor. Note that fruity breath can also hint at a medical issue like diabetes, but within the context of recognizing signs of oral health problems, bad or fruity-smelling breath is the relevant cue.

4. Identify two signs of dehydration in an older adult.

- A. Dry mouth and decreased urine output.**
- B. Increased appetite and energy.**
- C. Red face and high blood pressure.**
- D. Tearing eyes and increased saliva.**

When someone is dehydrated, their body has less fluid to work with, so you'll see signs that reflect this deficit. Two common indicators in older adults are a dry mouth and producing less urine. Dry mouth happens because there isn't enough water to keep the mucous membranes moist, and decreased urine output occurs as the kidneys conserve water to try to balance the deficit. Older adults are especially at risk because aging can dull thirst sensation and medications or illnesses can increase fluid loss. The other options don't fit dehydration as well. Increased appetite and extra energy aren't typical signs of dehydration; they would suggest adequate or excess intake and activity. A red face with high blood pressure isn't the usual pattern for dehydration, which more often affects blood pressure in the opposite direction or causes dizziness. Tearing eyes and more saliva aren't characteristic signs of dehydration either; dehydration tends to reduce tearing and saliva, not increase them.

5. What is the appropriate action if you observe a violation of a resident's rights?

- A. Address the issue directly with the resident.**
- B. Record the violation but ignore it.**
- C. Report violations to the appropriate supervisor and follow facility policy.**
- D. Wait for the next inspection to address it.**

When a resident's rights are violated, the proper action is to report it through the appropriate supervisory channel and follow facility policy. This ensures the incident is investigated, the resident's safety is protected, and corrective steps are taken in a consistent, legally compliant way. Documentation is key: note what happened, who was involved, dates and times, and any immediate harm or risk to the resident, then relay this to the supervisor or designated person per the facility's incident-reporting process. This approach upholds residents' rights and supports accountability and quality care across the team. Directly addressing the issue with the resident might not resolve the situation or could blur professional boundaries. Simply recording the violation without taking action leaves the problem unaddressed and risks ongoing harm. Waiting for the next inspection delays protection and remediation. Following the established reporting process ensures concerns are handled promptly and properly.

6. What is the initial objective when beginning a job search?

- A. To find a job**
- B. To obtain training**
- C. To prepare a résumé**
- D. To network informally**

The main aim when you start a job search is to obtain employment. All the supporting steps—training, preparing a résumé, and networking—are ways to reach that end, but they're means rather than the end itself. Training helps meet job requirements, a résumé helps you present qualifications to potential employers, and networking can uncover opportunities; however, none of these guarantees a job on its own. So, the best answer emphasizes landing a position first, since that's the goal you're working toward through those other activities.

7. Which condition describes not having enough fluid in the body?

- A. Hyperhydration**
- B. Electrolyte imbalance**
- C. Dehydration**
- D. Anemia**

Not having enough fluid in the body means dehydration. It happens when fluid losses exceed intake, so there isn't enough water to support vital functions like maintaining blood volume, regulating body temperature, and enabling kidney function. In older adults, dehydration is a common risk because thirst may be less noticeable, and certain medications or illnesses can increase fluid loss. Recognizing signs such as dry mouth, reduced urination with dark urine, dry skin, dizziness, or confusion helps prevent serious issues like urinary tract infections, kidney problems, or hypovolemia. Hyperhydration describes having too much fluid in the body, which can cause swelling and electrolyte problems. Electrolyte imbalance refers to disturbances in minerals such as sodium or potassium, which can occur with dehydration but is a separate issue from the fluid deficit itself. Anemia is a condition with low red blood cell or hemoglobin levels, not a direct description of fluid status.

8. How should a GNA handle questions about medical advice?

- A. Provide medical advice within your scope.**
- B. Acknowledge, redirect to licensed staff, and avoid giving medical advice beyond your role.**
- C. Ignore the question.**
- D. Advise the resident to self-prescribe medication.**

When a resident asks about medications or medical treatment, the main idea is to support them while sticking to your role and directing them to the right person for medical guidance. Acknowledge the concern, explain that you can't provide medical advice or dosing information, and promptly involve a licensed nurse or physician. You can offer reassurance and remind them to take medications as prescribed, but you should not discuss dosages, side effects, or treatment plans. Stay with the resident if needed and help contact the licensed staff, then document the concern for the care team. This keeps the resident safe and ensures they receive accurate guidance from someone who is licensed to provide it.

9. What should you do when a resident refuses a meal?

- A. Ignore and proceed with service.
- B. Force feed after all.
- C. Respect decision, document refusal, offer alternatives, and notify the nurse.**
- D. Delay documentation until later.

When a resident refuses a meal, the important idea is to honor their right to make that choice while still watching for their safety and nutrition. The correct approach is to respect the decision, document the refusal with the time and any reason given, offer alternatives (such as a different menu item, a smaller portion, or another snack later), and notify the nurse so they can assess why the meal was declined and adjust the plan of care if needed. This reflects autonomy and supports ongoing nutrition while ensuring the care team can intervene if there are underlying problems like pain, dental issues, nausea, or swallowing difficulty. For example, you might ask if they'd prefer a lighter option, a preferred food, or something to drink to stay hydrated, and you'd document what was offered and the outcome. Forcing feeding or ignoring the refusal undermines the resident's rights, can cause choking or aspiration, and is not safe or ethical. Delaying documentation delays necessary assessment and action by the nurse, which can compromise care.

10. Which position involves lying on the left side with one leg bent up?

- A. Sims Position**
- B. Supine Position
- C. Prone Position
- D. Fowler's Position

The situation described is Sims position. It involves lying on the left side with the upper leg bent at the hip and knee (the knee drawn up toward the chest). This position helps with rectal procedures, such as enemas or suppositories, and can also aid drainage and comfort. Lying on the back is a supine position, lying on the abdomen is prone, and sitting up with the head of the bed elevated is Fowler's position.

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://mdgna.examzify.com>

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

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