NPS Phlebotomy 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

1. **What term describes placing radioactive materials inside the body to treat cancer?**

   A. External beam radiation therapy

   B. Brachytherapy

   C. Chemotherapy

   D. Immunotherapy

2. **Sodium citrate, used in certain coagulation tests, primarily binds which ion?**

   A. Binds potassium

   B. Binds calcium

   C. Binds magnesium

   D. Binds iron

3. **Lavender-topped tubes are being replaced by pink stoppers.**

   A. Blue stoppers

   B. Green stoppers

   C. Pink stoppers

   D. Red stoppers

4. **Which term describes professional negligence during medical procedure?**

   A. Malpractice

   B. Negligence

   C. Informed consent

   D. Liability

5. **Which item is routinely used PPE during phlebotomy for every draw?**

   A. Gloves for all draws

   B. Lab Coat

   C. Eye Protection

   D. Mask Only

6. Which items are included on a standard specimen label?

- **A. Patient full name, unique identifier, date and time of collection, collector initials, and tests ordered**
- **B. Patient address, date of birth, physician name, tests charged**
- **C. Date and time of collection, specimen type, laboratory department code, nurse ID**
- **D. Patient full name, date of birth, ordering physician, and specimen source**

7. What are the small red/purple dots that appear on the skin and are flat?

- **A. Petechiae**
- **B. Purpura**
- **C. Ecchymosis**
- **D. Telangiectasia**

8. A collection tube can lose its vacuum if it stays on the shelf too long.

- **A. True**
- **B. False**
- **C. Depends on the tube**
- **D. Not sure**

9. The incision on a fingerstick should be made _____ to the fingerprints in the distal phalanx.

- **A. Tangential**
- **B. Perpendicular**
- **C. Diagonal**
- **D. Parallel**

10. What is the standard practice for preparing the skin before venipuncture?

- **A. Clean the site with an antiseptic such as 70% isopropyl alcohol or chlorhexidine; allow to dry completely before venipuncture.**
- **B. Wipe with water and soap.**
- **C. Do not use antiseptic.**
- **D. Sanitize with iodine and rinse**

Answers

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

Explanations

1. What term describes placing radioactive materials inside the body to treat cancer?

A. External beam radiation therapy

B. Brachytherapy

C. Chemotherapy

D. Immunotherapy

Placing radioactive material inside the body to treat cancer is brachytherapy. In this approach, sealed radioactive sources are placed directly into or near the tumor, delivering a high radiation dose from within the body and sparing surrounding healthy tissue. This internal placement is what sets brachytherapy apart from external beam radiation therapy, where radiation originates outside the body and passes through healthy tissue to reach the tumor. Chemotherapy uses systemic drugs that circulate throughout the body, not implanted radioactive sources. Immunotherapy relies on modulating the immune system to attack cancer, without internal radioactive materials. Brachytherapy is used for various cancers and can involve temporary or permanent implants, with different dose rates depending on the clinical situation.

2. Sodium citrate, used in certain coagulation tests, primarily binds which ion?

A. Binds potassium

B. Binds calcium

C. Binds magnesium

D. Binds iron

Calcium is essential for many steps in the coagulation cascade. Sodium citrate works as an anticoagulant by binding Ca2+ ions, removing free calcium from the blood sample and preventing clot formation. When testing is performed, calcium is added back to reinitiate coagulation so that clotting times (like PT or aPTT) can be measured. The other ions listed are not the primary targets of citrate in this context.

3. Lavender-topped tubes are being replaced by pink stoppers.

A. Blue stoppers

B. Green stoppers

C. Pink stoppers

D. Red stoppers

Color coding in blood collection tubes signals the additive and the intended tests. Lavender-topped tubes contain EDTA for hematology, but replacing them with pink-stopper tubes standardizes specimens for immunohematology and blood bank work. Both tube types have EDTA to prevent clotting by binding calcium, which preserves cells for accurate testing. The pink color specifically marks EDTA tubes used for blood bank compatibility testing, helping staff distinguish them from CBC/sedimentation tubes and reducing mix-ups. The other colors indicate different additives and uses: blue for coagulation studies with citrate, green for chemistry tests with heparin, and red for serum testing with no anticoagulant (or a clot activator).

4. Which term describes professional negligence during medical procedure?

A. Malpractice

B. Negligence

C. Informed consent

D. Liability

Professional negligence during a medical procedure is described by malpractice. Malpractice specifically refers to a healthcare professional failing to meet the accepted standard of care, resulting in harm to the patient. It carries the sense of professional duty and a breach of that duty in a medical setting. Negligence, by contrast, is a broader term for careless or reckless conduct and isn't limited to medical professionals. Informed consent is about obtaining a patient's permission after explaining risks and options, not about the act of harming or failing to meet standards. Liability means legal responsibility for damages, which can arise from many situations, not exclusively professional medical negligence. So, for professional negligence during a medical procedure, the precise term is malpractice.

5. Which item is routinely used PPE during phlebotomy for every draw?

A. Gloves for all draws

B. Lab Coat

C. Eye Protection

D. Mask Only

Wearing gloves for every venipuncture is the routine PPE because contact with blood and needles creates a risk of transmitting bloodborne pathogens. Gloves act as a clean barrier between the phlebotomist and the patient, helping prevent contamination in both directions. They should be donned after hand hygiene, used for the entire draw, changed between patients, and removed with proper technique followed by hand hygiene again. The other items—lab coats, eye protection, and masks—are not required for every draw; they're used only when there's a specific exposure risk, such as potential splashes to the eyes or mucous membranes or when institutional policies dictate additional protection. Hence, gloves for all draws is the standard practice.

6. Which items are included on a standard specimen label?

A. Patient full name, unique identifier, date and time of collection, collector initials, and tests ordered

B. Patient address, date of birth, physician name, tests charged

C. Date and time of collection, specimen type, laboratory department code, nurse ID

D. Patient full name, date of birth, ordering physician, and specimen source

Accurate specimen labeling hinges on linking the sample to the correct patient and order. The best label includes the patient's full name, a unique identifier, the date and time of collection, the collector's initials, and the tests ordered. The patient's full name helps identify the person, but a unique identifier (like an MRN or accession number) guarantees the specimen is tied to the exact patient, avoiding mix-ups with others who share a name. The date and time of collection provide the precise collection event, which is crucial for interpreting specimen integrity and timing. The collector's initials add accountability, showing who obtained the sample in case questions arise. Listing the tests ordered on the label ensures the lab processes the correct analyses and correctly links results to the intended orders. The other options include information that isn't needed on a standard specimen label or belongs elsewhere. Address and physician name are not essential for identifying and processing the specimen and can raise privacy concerns, while tests charged and certain codes are administrative details better placed on requisition or billing records rather than the label.

7. What are the small red/purple dots that appear on the skin and are flat?

A. Petechiae

B. Purpura

C. Ecchymosis

D. Telangiectasia

Petechiae are tiny red or purple flat spots caused by bleeding from small blood vessels (capillaries) into the skin. Their small size and flat appearance distinguish them from other types of skin hemorrhages: purpura are larger patches, ecchymosis are even bigger bruises from trauma, and telangiectasia are visible, dilated superficial vessels that look like red lines and usually blanch when pressed. The key with petechiae is that they are non-blanching and pinpoint, reflecting tiny capillary leakage rather than a surface vessel dilation. In phlebotomy, the appearance of petechiae at a puncture site can signal a risk of bleeding issues, so avoid drawing from that spot and note the finding for further evaluation if it appears beyond a single site.

8. A collection tube can lose its vacuum if it stays on the shelf too long.

A. True

B. False

C. Depends on the tube

D. Not sure

The vacuum inside evacuated collection tubes is built to be stable while the tube remains unopened and intact. The negative pressure is sealed in during manufacturing, and proper storage (within the specified conditions and before the expiration date) keeps that vacuum from leaking on the shelf. Only if the tube is damaged—cracked, broken stopper, punctured, or otherwise compromised—or is past its expiration or stored improperly would the vacuum be affected. So, simply staying on the shelf does not cause the vacuum to be lost; hence the statement is false.

9. The incision on a fingerstick should be made _____ to the fingerprints in the distal phalanx.

A. Tangential

B. Perpendicular

C. Diagonal

D. Parallel

Puncturing across the natural skin lines on the fingertip yields the cleanest, most reliable puncture. The fingerprint ridges run in a specific direction, and making the incision perpendicular to those ridges cuts through the skin in a way that opens into the tiny capillaries, producing a steady blood drop with minimal tissue tearing. If you cut along or across but not across properly (tangential, parallel, or a diagonal that does not cross the ridges cleanly), the wound can tear along the ridges or create a less controlled opening, leading to slower or inconsistent bleeding. So a perpendicular incision aligns with the goal of a quick, adequate capillary blood sample.

10. What is the standard practice for preparing the skin before venipuncture?

A. Clean the site with an antiseptic such as 70% isopropyl alcohol or chlorhexidine; allow to dry completely before venipuncture.

B. Wipe with water and soap.

C. Do not use antiseptic.

D. Sanitize with iodine and rinse

Preparing the skin for venipuncture focuses on reducing bacteria at the puncture site. The standard approach is to cleanse the area with an antiseptic such as 70% isopropyl alcohol or chlorhexidine and, crucially, let it dry completely before inserting the needle. Allowing the antiseptic to dry ensures it works effectively and prevents contamination of the blood sample from residual moisture or antiseptic carryover. Chlorhexidine offers persistent antimicrobial action, while alcohol acts quickly and evaporates, making either option acceptable in routine practice. Wiping with water and soap does not provide adequate antisepsis for venipuncture. Using iodine and rinsing can leave residues and requires more drying time, which can interfere with the procedure and lab tests. Therefore, antiseptic cleansing followed by complete air drying is the best practice.

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://npsphlebotomy.examzify.com

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