

# Patient Care Technician Certification (PCTC) AMCA Practice Exam (Sample)

## Study Guide



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**SAMPLE**

## **Questions**

- 1. When is it appropriate for a PCT to take vital signs?**
  - A. Only when patients request it**
  - B. After a patient has been admitted**
  - C. At random times throughout the day**
  - D. Whenever a doctor orders it**
- 2. What is a crucial step for a PCT when preparing a sterile field?**
  - A. Wear gloves before cleaning**
  - B. Leave the area open to air**
  - C. Ensure all items are sterile and maintain a barrier**
  - D. Gather all items in one large container**
- 3. What is the most commonly used size of an insulin syringe?**
  - A. 1 mL**
  - B. 3 mL**
  - C. 5 mL**
  - D. 10 mL**
- 4. How does a PCT assist with diagnostic tests?**
  - A. By performing the tests independently**
  - B. By preparing the patient and ensuring they understand the procedure**
  - C. By avoiding patient interaction during tests**
  - D. By administering medication before tests**
- 5. What safety measures should be taken when using a wheelchair?**
  - A. Ensure the wheelchair is locked and use footrests**
  - B. Only use the wheelchair when it is empty**
  - C. Always move the wheelchair without locking it**
  - D. Allow patients to stand while using the wheelchair**

- 6. What is the correct action a PCT should take when they notice a patient displaying an unusual change in condition?**
- A. Ignore it and continue working**
  - B. Report it to the supervising nurse or physician**
  - C. Document it and wait for the next scheduled check**
  - D. Ask the patient how they feel**
- 7. Which of the following actions reflects a violation of confidentiality in a healthcare setting?**
- A. Sharing patient information with a direct supervisor**
  - B. Discussing a patient case privately with a colleague**
  - C. Releasing patient information to the public**
  - D. Obtaining verbal consent before discussing treatment with another doctor**
- 8. What behavior might indicate to others that you are not listening?**
- A. Maintaining eye contact**
  - B. Nodding in agreement**
  - C. You sit with your arms crossed**
  - D. Asking clarifying questions**
- 9. How can a PCT support a patient's emotional needs?**
- A. By ignoring the patient's concerns**
  - B. By providing a listening ear and validating feelings**
  - C. By enforcing strict rules**
  - D. By minimizing patient interactions**
- 10. Why is accurate documentation of patient care crucial?**
- A. It only helps in hospital billing.**
  - B. It ensures continuity of care and provides a legal record of services.**
  - C. It is used mainly for educational purposes.**
  - D. It replaces the need for verbal communication.**

## **Answers**

SAMPLE

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

**SAMPLE**

## **Explanations**

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**1. When is it appropriate for a PCT to take vital signs?**

- A. Only when patients request it
- B. After a patient has been admitted**
- C. At random times throughout the day
- D. Whenever a doctor orders it

Taking vital signs is a crucial part of patient monitoring that enables healthcare providers to assess a patient's health status and identify any potential problems early. It is appropriate for a Patient Care Technician (PCT) to take vital signs after a patient has been admitted because this initial assessment establishes a baseline for the patient's health, which can be referenced in subsequent evaluations. This practice is essential for tailoring individual care and effectively responding to changes in the patient's condition. Establishing a baseline typically includes measuring parameters such as temperature, pulse, respiration rate, and blood pressure. This data guides medical decisions and informs the healthcare team about the patient's immediate and ongoing needs. Regularly scheduled vital signs may also be indicated depending on the patient's condition and clinical protocols, but the initial assessment upon admission is a standard requirement in patient care procedures. This helps ensure that any changes from the baseline can be detected promptly during their care.

**2. What is a crucial step for a PCT when preparing a sterile field?**

- A. Wear gloves before cleaning
- B. Leave the area open to air
- C. Ensure all items are sterile and maintain a barrier**
- D. Gather all items in one large container

The preparation of a sterile field is essential in healthcare settings to prevent infection and maintain patient safety during procedures. Ensuring that all items are sterile and maintaining a barrier is fundamental because it creates a controlled environment where microorganisms are minimized. In a sterile field, all instruments and materials must be free from pathogens to ensure patient safety. This step involves not only verifying that each item is sterile but also arranging them in such a way that they are not contaminated once the field is established. Maintaining a barrier is critical, as it helps to define the area of sterility and prevents unsterile items or actions from compromising the sterile environment. This controlled approach ensures that the sterile field remains intact until the procedure is complete. The other options, while related to infection control, do not meet the essential requirement for creating and maintaining a sterile field. For instance, wearing gloves before cleaning does not ensure the sterility of the field, and leaving the area open to air increases the risk of contamination from airborne pathogens. Gathering all items in one large container also poses a risk, as it does not assure that all items remain sterile and can lead to confusion about which items are sterile once they are removed from the container.

**3. What is the most commonly used size of an insulin syringe?**

- A. 1 mL**
- B. 3 mL**
- C. 5 mL**
- D. 10 mL**

The most commonly used size of an insulin syringe is the 1 mL syringe. This size is preferred for insulin administration because it allows for precise dosing, which is crucial in managing blood glucose levels in individuals with diabetes. Insulin doses are typically very small, often given in units rather than milliliters, hence the 1 mL syringe, which is commonly marked in units, is ideal for ensuring accuracy. Larger syringes, such as those holding 3 mL, 5 mL, or 10 mL, are not suitable for insulin due to the larger volume they represent. These syringes are generally used for other types of medications or injections, where a greater volume is necessary. Additionally, using a larger syringe for insulin could lead to dosing errors, making it more challenging to deliver the correct amount of insulin. Thus, the 1 mL syringe remains the standard in the administration of insulin.

**4. How does a PCT assist with diagnostic tests?**

- A. By performing the tests independently**
- B. By preparing the patient and ensuring they understand the procedure**
- C. By avoiding patient interaction during tests**
- D. By administering medication before tests**

A Patient Care Technician (PCT) plays a vital role in assisting with diagnostic tests by preparing the patient and ensuring they understand the procedure. This aspect of patient care is crucial because it helps reduce anxiety and promotes cooperation, making the testing process smoother and more effective. By explaining the procedure, the PCT ensures that the patient knows what to expect, which is essential for informed consent and for helping the patient feel comfortable during the test. Proper preparation may also include verifying patient information, securing the necessary equipment, and possibly prepping the patient physically in terms of fasting or wearing specific attire if needed. This supportive role enhances the overall quality of care provided and contributes to accurate diagnostic outcomes.

**5. What safety measures should be taken when using a wheelchair?**

- A. Ensure the wheelchair is locked and use footrests**
- B. Only use the wheelchair when it is empty**
- C. Always move the wheelchair without locking it**
- D. Allow patients to stand while using the wheelchair**

Ensuring that the wheelchair is locked and using footrests are critical safety measures. Locking the wheelchair prevents any unintended movement while the patient is getting in or out, thus reducing the risk of falls or accidents. Footrests are essential because they provide support for the patient's feet, preventing them from dragging on the ground or slipping off the sides, which can lead to instability or injury. Both of these practices contribute to a safer environment for patients, caregivers, and bystanders, making them fundamental components of proper wheelchair usage. Adhering to these measures fosters a secure experience and reflects best practices within patient care.

6. What is the correct action a PCT should take when they notice a patient displaying an unusual change in condition?
- A. Ignore it and continue working
  - B. Report it to the supervising nurse or physician**
  - C. Document it and wait for the next scheduled check
  - D. Ask the patient how they feel

When a patient care technician (PCT) observes an unusual change in a patient's condition, the appropriate action is to report this observation to the supervising nurse or physician. This is critical because healthcare professionals rely on collaborative communication to ensure patient safety and proper care. Unusual changes could indicate a deterioration in health or a need for immediate medical attention. By reporting the observation, the PCT ensures that the supervising healthcare provider can assess the situation and take necessary actions, which could include further investigation, adjustments to the treatment plan, or providing immediate care to prevent complications. While checking in with the patient or documenting changes may seem helpful, these actions do not substitute the need for professional evaluation and immediate intervention if necessary. Ignoring the change could lead to serious consequences for the patient, and waiting until the next scheduled check may delay critical care. Thus, the direct communication of observations to a supervising professional is essential in maintaining a safe and effective healthcare environment.

7. Which of the following actions reflects a violation of confidentiality in a healthcare setting?
- A. Sharing patient information with a direct supervisor
  - B. Discussing a patient case privately with a colleague
  - C. Releasing patient information to the public**
  - D. Obtaining verbal consent before discussing treatment with another doctor

The action of releasing patient information to the public constitutes a clear violation of confidentiality in a healthcare setting. Confidentiality is a fundamental principle in healthcare that protects the privacy of patients and their personal health information. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the United States establishes strict guidelines for the handling of patient information, emphasizing that such information should only be shared with authorized individuals and institutions for legitimate purposes related to patient care. When patient information is released publicly, it not only compromises the individual's right to privacy but also undermines the trust that patients place in healthcare providers. This breach can expose patients to various repercussions, including social stigma or discrimination, and can lead to legal consequences for the healthcare provider or facility involved. In contrast, sharing patient information with a direct supervisor or discussing a patient case privately with a colleague, when done within the context of patient care and where all parties are authorized to have access to that information, does not violate confidentiality. Similarly, obtaining verbal consent before discussing treatment with another doctor respects patient autonomy and legal boundaries, reinforcing the importance of confidentiality while collaborating on patient care.

**8. What behavior might indicate to others that you are not listening?**

- A. Maintaining eye contact**
- B. Nodding in agreement**
- C. You sit with your arms crossed**
- D. Asking clarifying questions**

The indication that someone is not actively listening often manifests through body language and posture. Sitting with arms crossed can signal defensiveness or disinterest. This posture can create a physical barrier between the listener and the speaker, suggesting that the listener is closed off to the conversation. In contrast, maintaining eye contact, nodding in agreement, and asking clarifying questions are all positive behaviors that typically demonstrate engagement and attentiveness. They show an understanding and receptiveness to the speaker's message, which is crucial for effective communication.

**9. How can a PCT support a patient's emotional needs?**

- A. By ignoring the patient's concerns**
- B. By providing a listening ear and validating feelings**
- C. By enforcing strict rules**
- D. By minimizing patient interactions**

A Patient Care Technician (PCT) plays a crucial role in supporting a patient's emotional needs, which is an essential aspect of holistic care. Providing a listening ear and validating feelings allows the patient to express their concerns, fears, and emotions, fostering a sense of trust and safety. This empathetic approach can significantly reduce feelings of anxiety and isolation that many patients experience during their healthcare journey. When a PCT actively listens and acknowledges what the patient is feeling, it helps to create a therapeutic relationship, enhances patient satisfaction, and can even contribute to better health outcomes. Validation of feelings shows the patient that their emotions are recognized and respected, which can encourage them to be more open about their experiences and needs. Supporting emotional needs is particularly vital in healthcare settings, where patients may feel vulnerable and uncertain. The presence of a compassionate listener can make a significant difference in their overall experience and promote a positive environment for healing and recovery.

**10. Why is accurate documentation of patient care crucial?**

**A. It only helps in hospital billing.**

**B. It ensures continuity of care and provides a legal record of services.**

**C. It is used mainly for educational purposes.**

**D. It replaces the need for verbal communication.**

Accurate documentation of patient care is crucial because it ensures continuity of care and provides a legal record of the services rendered. When healthcare providers document patient interactions, treatments, and responses, they create a comprehensive medical record that can be utilized by other members of the healthcare team to make informed decisions about ongoing care. This documentation serves as a communication tool that helps different professionals coordinate their efforts, thereby improving patient outcomes. Additionally, a well-maintained record can protect both the patient and the provider in case of disputes, as it establishes a factual account of what care was provided. Legal issues can arise from inadequate documentation, making it vital for safeguarding against potential liability. Overall, thorough and accurate documentation is part of delivering quality healthcare and ensuring that patients receive the best possible treatment.