

Prioritizing HESI Practice Test (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. After a natural disaster, which client would be triaged at emergent level by the nurse?**
 - A. Unstable vital signs**
 - B. Active arterial bleeding**
 - C. Chest pain with nausea**
 - D. Simple fracture of the forearm**

- 2. What activity would most likely be pursued to secure a position as a clinical nurse leader in a major urban hospital?**
 - A. Pass the certification examination**
 - B. Complete a master's degree in nursing**
 - C. Learn how to prepare clinical pathways**
 - D. Attend 30 hours of continuing education about the role**

- 3. Which sequence correctly lists the steps for assessing the chest after a fire in a client with a suspected heart injury?**
 - A. Inspect the chest for paradoxical movements; Palpate the sternum, clavicles, and ribs; Auscultate breath sounds and heart sounds; Evaluate for rib fractures and chest injuries; Obtain imaging.**
 - B. Obtain a chest X-ray and 12-lead ECG; Inspect the chest; Palpate the sternum and ribs; Auscultate; Evaluate injuries.**
 - C. Palpate the sternum, clavicles, and ribs; Inspect the chest; Auscultate; Evaluate; Obtain imaging.**
 - D. Auscultate breath sounds and heart sounds; Inspect the chest; Palpate; Obtain imaging; Evaluate.**

- 4. In an emergent triage scenario, which patient is most likely in need of immediate attention?**
 - A. Renal colic**
 - B. Sprained ankle**
 - C. Respiratory distress**
 - D. Severe abdominal pain that is manageable with analgesia**

- 5. Which statement is true about case management?**
- A. It focuses only on medical treatment and not client advocacy**
 - B. It emphasizes identifying outcomes and coordinating care activities**
 - C. It is primarily concerned with reducing staff workload**
 - D. It excludes family involvement**
- 6. Which sequence represents the correct order to teach a client the supraglottic method of swallowing?**
- A. 1, 6, 2, 3, 5, 4**
 - B. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6**
 - C. 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5**
 - D. 1, 5, 4, 3, 2, 6**
- 7. In the Emergency Severity Index system, which statement is true?**
- A. ESI-2 clients do not have life-threatening injuries**
 - B. ESI-4 clients present with stable vital signs**
 - C. ESI-1 clients should be seen by the provider within 10 minutes**
 - D. Clients with severe respiratory distress fall within the ESI-4 category**
- 8. After stabilization of a client admitted with shock secondary to severe GI bleeding, what is the primary nursing intervention?**
- A. Monitor the peripheral pulses.**
 - B. Check the level of consciousness.**
 - C. Take a blood sample for laboratory tests.**
 - D. Control the bleeding with a pressure dressing.**
- 9. In a primary nursing model, which role is the one primarily described as coordinating patient care?**
- A. Manager**
 - B. Advocate**
 - C. Decision maker**
 - D. Care coordinator**

10. What role do case managers play in the primary nursing model?

- A. Coordinate care of select clients to manage costs and ensure quality**
- B. Administer medications**
- C. Schedule shifts**
- D. Conduct annual performance reviews**

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. After a natural disaster, which client would be triaged at emergent level by the nurse?

- A. Unstable vital signs**
- B. Active arterial bleeding**
- C. Chest pain with nausea**
- D. Simple fracture of the forearm**

In mass casualty triage, the most time-sensitive category goes to injuries that will cause death if not treated immediately. Active arterial bleeding is the clearest example of that: arterial blood loss can rapidly lead to hemorrhagic shock and death within minutes, so stopping the bleed right away is the highest priority. The immediate steps are to apply direct pressure, consider wound packing, and transport for definitive care as quickly as possible. Unstable vital signs signal serious danger, but without a bleeding source that can overwhelm the body so quickly, those patients are not as urgently time-critical as a person whose bleeding is actively ongoing. Chest pain with nausea raises concern for cardiac or other urgent issues, but again, unless there is an ongoing life-threat like heavy bleeding, it isn't as immediately fatal in the near term as uncontrolled arterial hemorrhage. A simple fracture of the forearm is a non-life-threatening injury in this context and can be addressed after the most urgent cases. So, the client with active arterial bleeding is triaged at emergent level because stopping the bleeding promptly is the most critical step to prevent rapid death.

2. What activity would most likely be pursued to secure a position as a clinical nurse leader in a major urban hospital?

- A. Pass the certification examination**
- B. Complete a master's degree in nursing**
- C. Learn how to prepare clinical pathways**
- D. Attend 30 hours of continuing education about the role**

A clinical nurse leader is a leadership-focused nursing role that requires advanced preparation to coordinate care, lead quality improvement, and manage patient outcomes at the unit level in complex hospital settings. The most direct way to become eligible for this position is to complete a Master of Science in Nursing, which provides the essential leadership, systems-thinking, and data-driven decision-making skills needed to oversee care delivery across teams and processes. Certification can validate expertise after earning the degree, but it doesn't establish eligibility as clearly as having the master's-level education does. While learning to map clinical pathways or accruing continuing education can enhance performance, they don't replace the foundational qualifications a master's degree provides for this advanced role.

3. Which sequence correctly lists the steps for assessing the chest after a fire in a client with a suspected heart injury?

- A. Inspect the chest for paradoxical movements; Palpate the sternum, clavicles, and ribs; Auscultate breath sounds and heart sounds; Evaluate for rib fractures and chest injuries; Obtain imaging.**
- B. Obtain a chest X-ray and 12-lead ECG; Inspect the chest; Palpate the sternum and ribs; Auscultate; Evaluate injuries.**
- C. Palpate the sternum, clavicles, and ribs; Inspect the chest; Auscultate; Evaluate; Obtain imaging.**
- D. Auscultate breath sounds and heart sounds; Inspect the chest; Palpate; Obtain imaging; Evaluate.**

The main idea is to perform a careful, sequential chest assessment in trauma that quickly identifies life-threatening signs before confirming injuries with imaging. Begin with a visual check for paradoxical chest movement because a sudden inward motion of a portion of the chest with breathing signals flail chest, a condition that can severely impair ventilation and requires immediate attention. After that, palpate the sternum, clavicles, and ribs to feel for tenderness, deformities, or crepitus, which helps identify rib or sternal injuries and guides how you'll support and treat the patient. Next, listen to breath sounds and heart sounds to assess how well the lungs are ventilating and to detect issues such as pneumothorax, hemothorax, contusions, or signs suggesting cardiac involvement. Then synthesize what you've found to determine likely injuries and need for further evaluation. Finally, obtain imaging to confirm the diagnosis and to plan management. Starting with imaging or with auscultation before completing the visual and tactile exam can miss important signs, and reordering steps at the outset may delay recognizing chest-wall instability and ventilation problems.

4. In an emergent triage scenario, which patient is most likely in need of immediate attention?

- A. Renal colic**
- B. Sprained ankle**
- C. Respiratory distress**
- D. Severe abdominal pain that is manageable with analgesia**

In emergent triage, the most critical factor is ensuring the patient's airway and breathing are protected because problems there can cause rapid deterioration. Respiratory distress signals that ventilation or gas exchange may be compromised, putting the patient at immediate risk of hypoxia or respiratory failure if not addressed right away. That urgency outweighs pain from renal colic, a sprained ankle, or abdominal pain that can be managed with analgesia, as those conditions can typically be evaluated and treated soon after the airway and breathing are secured. Look for signs like increased work of breathing, use of accessory muscles, rapid or shallow breaths, decreasing oxygen saturation, or confusion—these indicate a need for immediate intervention.

5. Which statement is true about case management?

- A. It focuses only on medical treatment and not client advocacy
- B. It emphasizes identifying outcomes and coordinating care activities**
- C. It is primarily concerned with reducing staff workload
- D. It excludes family involvement

Case management is a collaborative, client-centered process that focuses on outcomes and coordinating care activities across services to reach those outcomes. It begins with identifying the client's goals and then linking medical care with social supports, resources, and services, arranging access, and ensuring that all members of the care team communicate and work toward the same plan. Family involvement is often integral, since relatives and caregivers can support decision-making, help implement the plan, and monitor progress. This approach contrasts with narrower views that limit case management to medical treatment, or that aim primarily to reduce staff workload, or that exclude families. The strength of this statement is that it captures the purpose of aligning efforts and resources to achieve defined outcomes for the client.

6. Which sequence represents the correct order to teach a client the supraglottic method of swallowing?

- A. 1, 6, 2, 3, 5, 4**
- B. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
- C. 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- D. 1, 5, 4, 3, 2, 6

Airway protection during swallowing with the supraglottic technique relies on a careful sequence that protects the airway before, during, and after the swallow. Start by taking a breath and holding it so the vocal folds close and the airway inlet is sealed. While holding the breath, perform the swallow to move the material past the airway with the airway protected. Immediately after the swallow, cough to clear any material from the airway. If needed, a second swallow can be used to ensure any remaining residue is cleared. Finally, release the hold and return to normal breathing. This order is important because it keeps the airway protected during the swallow and ensures any aspirated material is promptly expelled, reducing the risk of penetration or aspiration.

7. In the Emergency Severity Index system, which statement is true?

- A. ESI-2 clients do not have life-threatening injuries**
- B. ESI-4 clients present with stable vital signs**
- C. ESI-1 clients should be seen by the provider within 10 minutes**
- D. Clients with severe respiratory distress fall within the ESI-4 category**

In Emergency Severity Index triage, the level combines how urgent the patient's condition is with how many resources they will likely need. A patient classified as level four is stable and typically requires only one resource (for example, a single imaging test or a small set of labs). That makes the statement about stable vital signs for level four true. If someone has severe respiratory distress, that is a life-threatening situation and would be treated as the most urgent level, not level four. The highest-urgency level is immediate life-saving intervention, which is addressed right away, not within any short waiting window. Level two covers emergent conditions that are high risk or potentially life-threatening but not the immediate crisis of level one, and level three usually involves multiple resources. Level five would involve no resources. So, the true takeaway is that level four patients are typically stable and require one resource.

8. After stabilization of a client admitted with shock secondary to severe GI bleeding, what is the primary nursing intervention?

- A. Monitor the peripheral pulses.**
- B. Check the level of consciousness.**
- C. Take a blood sample for laboratory tests.**
- D. Control the bleeding with a pressure dressing.**

Immediately after stabilization, drawing blood for laboratory studies is the most important nursing action because it provides the data needed to guide ongoing management of the shock from GI bleeding. Lab results quantify how much blood has been lost (hemoglobin and hematocrit), reveal ongoing bleeding and anemia trends, and show coagulation status (PT/INR, aPTT) to detect coagulopathy that could worsen bleeding. A type and crossmatch may be prepared for possible transfusion, and metabolic panels, renal function, electrolytes, and blood gases help assess perfusion effects, guide fluid therapy, and evaluate acid-base balance. This information directly influences decisions about transfusion, further interventions, and monitoring frequency. While checking pulses and level of consciousness are essential ongoing assessments, they don't provide the actionable data needed to tailor therapy, and a pressure dressing is not applicable for an internal GI bleed. Lab data drives the next steps in care.

9. In a primary nursing model, which role is the one primarily described as coordinating patient care?

- A. Manager**
- B. Advocate**
- C. Decision maker**
- D. Care coordinator**

In primary nursing, one nurse takes responsibility for the patient's overall care plan and acts as the central point of contact for the patient, family, and the health-care team. The role that best describes coordinating all aspects of care across shifts and disciplines is the care coordinator. This person ensures that orders, treatments, education, and discharge planning are harmonized, and that the plan stays consistent as the patient's needs evolve, communicating with the entire team to keep everyone on the same page. A primary nurse may also advocate for the patient and participate in clinical decisions, but the defining function here is orchestrating the coordination of care across the care continuum. The other roles are more aligned with administrative leadership, patient advocacy, or individual clinical decision-making rather than the ongoing, system-wide coordination of care.

10. What role do case managers play in the primary nursing model?

- A. Coordinate care of select clients to manage costs and ensure quality**
- B. Administer medications**
- C. Schedule shifts**
- D. Conduct annual performance reviews**

In the primary nursing model, the focus is on continuity and coordination of care led by a primary nurse for each patient. Case managers support this by coordinating all aspects of a patient's care across disciplines, ensuring the care plan is carried out smoothly and efficiently. They assess needs, link the patient with appropriate services, arrange resources such as therapies, social work support, and post-discharge arrangements, and communicate across the team to keep everyone aligned with the patient's goals. This role helps balance cost and quality by avoiding duplications, delays, or gaps in care, while supporting the primary nurse's plan and the patient's overall outcomes. Administering medications is a direct clinical task performed by licensed staff, not the case manager. Scheduling shifts is an operational responsibility, and annual performance reviews fall under supervisory or human resources duties.

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://prioritizinghesi.examzify.com>

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

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