

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. Using the Five-Level Emergency Severity Index (ESI), which client should be designated as needing prioritized care?**
 - A. Adult with mild chest pain**
 - B. Adolescent with possible wrist fracture**
 - C. Older adult with painful hip fracture**
 - D. School-age child with asthma presenting with dyspnea**

- 2. Based on age and findings, which client would the nurse consider at the highest risk for developing pneumonia?**
 - A. Client A**
 - B. Client B**
 - C. Client C**
 - D. Client D**

- 3. In the emergency department, a client arrives after a bomb blast. Which sequence correctly lists the nursing actions from first to last?**
 - A. Establish airway; Protect cervical spine by maintaining alignment; Assess breath sounds and respiratory effort; Monitor blood pressure and pulse rate; Evaluate client's level of consciousness; Cover the client with a blanket.**
 - B. Protect cervical spine by maintaining alignment; Establish airway; Monitor blood pressure and pulse rate; Assess breath sounds and respiratory effort; Cover the client with a blanket; Evaluate client's level of consciousness.**
 - C. Establish airway; Assess breath sounds and respiratory effort; Protect cervical spine by maintaining alignment; Evaluate client's level of consciousness; Monitor blood pressure and pulse rate; Cover the client with a blanket.**
 - D. Evaluate client's level of consciousness; Establish airway; Protect cervical spine by maintaining alignment; Assess breath sounds; Monitor blood pressure and pulse rate; Cover the client with a blanket.**

- 4. Which action is most important to implement first when a client receiving a meperidine infusion develops seizures?**
 - A. Stop administration of meperidine**
 - B. Administer transdermal scopolamine**
 - C. Administer oxygen (O₂) through a facial mask**
 - D. Monitor respiratory status and sedation level**

- 5. In the emergency department, which sequence correctly treats a snake bite?**
- A. 1, 2, 3, 5, 4**
 - B. 2, 1, 3, 4, 5**
 - C. 1, 3, 2, 4, 5**
 - D. 1, 2, 4, 3, 5**
- 6. A client with suspected chest injury after a fire is being evaluated. Which sequence is correct for the steps to assess the chest?**
- A. Inspect chest; Palpate sternum and ribs; Auscultate breath and heart sounds; Evaluate injuries; Obtain imaging.**
 - B. Obtain imaging first; Inspect chest; Palpate sternum; Auscultate; Evaluate.**
 - C. Palpate sternum and ribs; Inspect chest; Auscultate; Evaluate; Obtain imaging.**
 - D. Auscultate breath and heart sounds; Inspect chest; Palpate; Obtain imaging; Evaluate.**
- 7. Which medication requires reporting shortness of breath as a potential adverse effect?**
- A. Hydroxychloroquine**
 - B. Infliximab**
 - C. Methotrexate**
 - D. Ephedrine**
- 8. Before implementing differentiated nursing practice, which element should be clearly defined?**
- A. Salary ranges**
 - B. Client caseloads**
 - C. Position descriptions**
 - D. Expected competencies**
- 9. Which assessment is a nursing priority to prevent complications in clients with respiratory acidosis?**
- A. Observing the nail beds**
 - B. Listening to breath sounds**
 - C. Monitoring breathing status**
 - D. Checking muscle contractions**

10. During the primary survey airway assessment in the emergency department, which action is appropriate?

- A. Assess edema**
- B. Counting respiratory rate**
- C. Checking for foreign bodies**
- D. Noting use of accessory muscles**

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Using the Five-Level Emergency Severity Index (ESI), which client should be designated as needing prioritized care?

- A. Adult with mild chest pain**
- B. Adolescent with possible wrist fracture**
- C. Older adult with painful hip fracture**
- D. School-age child with asthma presenting with dyspnea**

In this system, priority is guided by whether a patient's airway, breathing, or circulation is at risk and by how many resources they'll likely require. Breathing problems, especially in children, are treated as the most urgent because airway compromise can progress rapidly and lead to sudden deterioration. The school-age child with asthma presenting with dyspnea signals potential airway obstruction and hypoxemia. This situation demands prompt assessment and immediate intervention (for example, oxygen and rapid-acting bronchodilators, possibly steroids, and close monitoring) to prevent respiratory failure. That's why this scenario is designated as needing prioritized care. The adult with mild chest pain is typically stable and unlikely to need immediate life-saving intervention. The adolescent with a possible wrist fracture is a non-life-threatening injury with lower urgency. The older adult with a painful hip fracture is serious and requires timely management, but without current airway or breathing distress, it doesn't rise to the same urgent level as a respiratory emergency in a child.

2. Based on age and findings, which client would the nurse consider at the highest risk for developing pneumonia?

- A. Client A**
- B. Client B**
- C. Client C**
- D. Client D**

The main concept here is identifying pneumonia risk by looking at age-related vulnerability and factors that weaken the body's defenses or airway protection. As people age, the immune system and lung defenses become less effective, and clearance of secretions can slow. When age comes with additional risk factors—such as immobility, swallowing difficulties, altered consciousness, or chronic illnesses—the chance of developing pneumonia increases because secretions can pool, aspiration risk rises, and the body's ability to fight infection is diminished. The client who is oldest and who also shows findings that indicate impaired airway protection or clearance has the highest risk. That combination—advanced age plus indicators of compromised swallowing, reduced mobility, or other conditions that impair coughing or mucociliary function—raises the likelihood of pneumonia more than younger clients or those without these risk factors. So, the client identified as the highest risk is the one with the greatest convergence of advanced age and these protective-defense impairments, which makes pneumonia development more likely than for the others.

3. In the emergency department, a client arrives after a bomb blast. Which sequence correctly lists the nursing actions from first to last?

- A. Establish airway; Protect cervical spine by maintaining alignment; Assess breath sounds and respiratory effort; Monitor blood pressure and pulse rate; Evaluate client's level of consciousness; Cover the client with a blanket.**
- B. Protect cervical spine by maintaining alignment; Establish airway; Monitor blood pressure and pulse rate; Assess breath sounds and respiratory effort; Cover the client with a blanket; Evaluate client's level of consciousness.**
- C. Establish airway; Assess breath sounds and respiratory effort; Protect cervical spine by maintaining alignment; Evaluate client's level of consciousness; Monitor blood pressure and pulse rate; Cover the client with a blanket.**
- D. Evaluate client's level of consciousness; Establish airway; Protect cervical spine by maintaining alignment; Assess breath sounds; Monitor blood pressure and pulse rate; Cover the client with a blanket.**

Trauma care follows the ABCDE sequence, addressing life-threatening issues in order of priority. The very first action is to secure a patent airway, because without airway protection the patient cannot be oxygenated. At the same time, cervical spine injury is a real possibility in blast victims, so maintaining spinal alignment during airway management is essential rather than delaying stabilization. Once the airway is secured with spine protection, evaluate breathing to assess adequacy, look for respiratory effort limits, and identify chest injuries that may need immediate intervention. After breathing is addressed, check circulation by monitoring blood pressure and pulse and looking for uncontrolled bleeding or signs of shock. Then assess the patient's level of consciousness to gauge neurologic status. Finally, take steps to prevent hypothermia and provide comfort, such as covering with a blanket. This sequence ensures the most critical threats to life are managed first and that protection for the spine is maintained throughout.

4. Which action is most important to implement first when a client receiving a meperidine infusion develops seizures?

- A. Stop administration of meperidine**
- B. Administer transdermal scopolamine**
- C. Administer oxygen (O₂) through a facial mask**
- D. Monitor respiratory status and sedation level**

Stopping the meperidine infusion right away is the first and most important step because meperidine and its metabolite normeperidine can precipitate seizures by lowering the brain's seizure threshold. Removing the offending drug eliminates the immediate trigger and helps halt ongoing seizure activity, reducing the risk of further CNS stimulation. After stopping the infusion, provide supportive care by assessing and maintaining the airway and breathing (oxygen by mask if needed) and closely monitoring respiratory status and sedation level, since opioid infusions can depress respiration. If seizures persist, proceed with the appropriate seizure management and inform the prescriber for further analgesia options.

5. In the emergency department, which sequence correctly treats a snake bite?

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

The key idea is to stabilize the patient quickly, limit how fast venom can spread, and treat envenomation promptly while avoiding harmful interventions. Start by ensuring the airway and breathing are secure and that circulation is stable, with IV access established for fluids and meds. As swelling can develop rapidly, remove rings, watches, or other tight items on the affected limb to prevent constriction. Immobilize the bitten limb with a rigid splint to minimize movement and slow venom dispersal through the lymphatic system. After stabilization and initialization of monitoring, assess for signs of envenomation; if there are systemic symptoms or progressive local effects, administer antivenom promptly and monitor closely for reactions during the infusion. Provide tetanus prophylaxis and address pain as appropriate. Avoid interventions that don't help and can cause harm, such as cutting the wound, suction, ice, or tourniquets. Keep the patient under observation to catch any delayed signs and adjust care as needed.

6. A client with suspected chest injury after a fire is being evaluated. Which sequence is correct for the steps to assess the chest?

- A. Inspect chest; Palpate sternum and ribs; Auscultate breath and heart sounds; Evaluate injuries; Obtain imaging.**
- B. Obtain imaging first; Inspect chest; Palpate sternum; Auscultate; Evaluate.**
- C. Palpate sternum and ribs; Inspect chest; Auscultate; Evaluate; Obtain imaging.**
- D. Auscultate breath and heart sounds; Inspect chest; Palpate; Obtain imaging; Evaluate.**

In evaluating a chest injury after a fire, you approach it with a quick, organized sequence that starts with what you can see and feel before moving to confirmation tests. Begin by inspecting the chest for any obvious deformities, wounds, burns, asymmetry of movement, or signs of chest wall instability. This visual step helps you spot life-threatening issues and guides immediate actions. Next, palpate the sternum and ribs to check for tenderness, crepitus, and any deformities or instability, which can indicate fractures that require careful management. Then listen to the breath and heart sounds to assess how well the lungs are functioning and whether the heart is delivering adequate circulation. Absent or unequal breath sounds can point to pneumothorax or hemothorax, while abnormal heart sounds might signal tamponade or other cardiac concerns. After integrating these findings with the mechanism of injury and the patient's vital signs, you determine the priorities and need for interventions. Imaging is obtained to confirm injuries and plan treatment, but only after the initial assessment and stabilization steps have been addressed. This order minimizes delays in airway and breathing management and uses clinical findings to guide the use and urgency of imaging.

7. Which medication requires reporting shortness of breath as a potential adverse effect?

- A. Hydroxychloroquine**
- B. Infliximab**
- C. Methotrexate**
- D. Ephedrine**

Shortness of breath signals a possible infusion-related reaction to infliximab, a monoclonal antibody used for autoimmune diseases. Because these reactions can occur during or after the IV infusion and may progress to more serious events like anaphylaxis, reporting new or worsening dyspnea right away is essential so the infusion can be paused and appropriate treatment started. While other medications have their own adverse effects, infliximab carries a notable risk of infusion-related respiratory symptoms, making SOB a key side effect to monitor and report.

8. Before implementing differentiated nursing practice, which element should be clearly defined?

- A. Salary ranges**
- B. Client caseloads**
- C. Position descriptions**
- D. Expected competencies**

Before differentiating nursing practice, clearly defining the expected competencies is essential. These are the measurable knowledge, skills, and abilities that nurses must demonstrate to perform specific roles safely and effectively. When competencies are defined, you have a concrete basis to slot staff into appropriate duties, set relevant expectations, and guide education and evaluation. This ensures that differentiation aligns with patient needs and actual capabilities rather than being based on salary, caseload, or title alone. Salary ranges, client caseloads, and position descriptions are important for administration and staffing, but they rely on a solid set of competencies to determine who does what, how much they are paid, and how their performance is assessed.

9. Which assessment is a nursing priority to prevent complications in clients with respiratory acidosis?

- A. Observing the nail beds**
- B. Listening to breath sounds**
- C. Monitoring breathing status**
- D. Checking muscle contractions**

Monitoring breathing status is the most important nursing action to prevent complications in respiratory acidosis. This condition stems from inadequate ventilation that allows CO₂ to build up, causing acidemia and increasing the risk of hypoxemia and respiratory failure. By continuously assessing how the patient is ventilating—rate, depth, effort, and use of accessory muscles—and how well gas exchange is occurring (through oxygen saturation and, when available, capnography or ABG trends), the nurse can spot early signs of deterioration and escalate care promptly. This focused monitoring guides interventions to improve ventilation and gas exchange, such as positioning, airway support, and appropriate therapies as ordered. Observing nail beds or listening to breath sounds provides helpful information, but they don't offer a comprehensive, ongoing picture of ventilation status needed to prevent complications. Checking muscle contractions, while useful in other contexts, doesn't directly address the ventilation and gas exchange priorities in this scenario.

10. During the primary survey airway assessment in the emergency department, which action is appropriate?

- A. Assess edema**
- B. Counting respiratory rate**
- C. Checking for foreign bodies**
- D. Noting use of accessory muscles**

During the primary survey, the airway check is all about quickly confirming patency and identifying anything causing immediate obstruction. Checking for foreign bodies is essential because a blockage right in the airway is a life-threatening, time-sensitive issue—finding it allows immediate suctioning or removal to restore airflow. Other actions you might think of—like counting the respiratory rate, noting the use of accessory muscles, or assessing for edema—inform the status of breathing and potential future risk, but they do not address a current obstruction as directly as confirming whether a foreign body is present in the airway. Counting rate and observing work of breathing help gauge severity and need for support, while edema assessment indicates swelling risk, but the priority in the airway check is ensuring there's no obstructing object.

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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