

SFMS Dental Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Table of Contents

Copyright	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
How to Use This Guide	4
Questions	5
Answers	8
Explanations	10
Next Steps	16

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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. Which symptom is NOT typically associated with an avulsed tooth?**
 - A. Tooth sensitivity**
 - B. Bleeding from the socket**
 - C. Swelling of the gums**
 - D. Lack of mobility**
- 2. During which dental procedure is a crown placed?**
 - A. When a tooth is significantly damaged or decayed**
 - B. When whitening teeth**
 - C. During routine check-ups**
 - D. When placing dental implants**
- 3. What is the role of a dental lab technician?**
 - A. To create dental prosthetics, crowns, and bridges based on dentists' specifications**
 - B. To clean and polish teeth during patient visits**
 - C. To replace missing teeth with dental implants**
 - D. To administer medications to patients**
- 4. What is the best definition of the philtrum?**
 - A. The area above the upper lip**
 - B. The median groove on the external surface of the lip**
 - C. The bottom part of the lip**
 - D. A groove along the chin**
- 5. What is the best way to avoid aspiration of a tooth or root during a procedure?**
 - A. Using a larger instrument**
 - B. Proper instrument handling**
 - C. Administering more anesthesia**
 - D. Removing all saliva before starting**

6. What characterizes aphthous ulcers?

- A. Painless sores on the gums**
- B. Very painful and movable tissue**
- C. Require surgical removal**
- D. Only occur in children**

7. Which of the following is NOT one of the major muscles of mastication?

- A. Masseter**
- B. Temporalis**
- C. Medial Pterygoid**
- D. Deltoid**

8. What does the acronym “ADA” stand for in dental practice?

- A. American Dental Association**
- B. American Dental Alliance**
- C. American Dentists Association**
- D. American Dental Association of Professionals**

9. What type of bristles should toothbrushes have for effective cleaning?

- A. Hard**
- B. Medium**
- C. Soft**
- D. Extra soft**

10. How is a periodontal abscess best defined?

- A. Occurring in shallow pockets**
- B. Located in dentin**
- C. Usually found in pockets greater than 7mm with pain and swelling**
- D. Always associated with gum recession**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which symptom is NOT typically associated with an avulsed tooth?

- A. Tooth sensitivity**
- B. Bleeding from the socket**
- C. Swelling of the gums**
- D. Lack of mobility**

An avulsed tooth is one that has been completely knocked out of its socket. When this occurs, the body responds with certain symptoms that reflect the trauma and the state of the surrounding tissues. Bleeding from the socket is common, as the trauma to the periodontal tissues and adjacent blood vessels can lead to significant bleeding. Swelling of the gums can also accompany an avulsion due to inflammation and the body's immune response to the injury. Tooth sensitivity often follows an avulsion because of damage to the nerve endings within the tooth or the periodontal ligament. In contrast, a lack of mobility in the context of an avulsed tooth is not a typical symptom. An avulsed tooth is no longer anchored in the socket, which generally indicates that it would no longer exhibit mobility—rather, the tooth is entirely absent from its initial location. Therefore, the correct answer, indicating what is not associated with an avulsed tooth, is indeed the lack of mobility.

2. During which dental procedure is a crown placed?

- A. When a tooth is significantly damaged or decayed**
- B. When whitening teeth**
- C. During routine check-ups**
- D. When placing dental implants**

A crown is placed during a dental procedure primarily when a tooth has become significantly damaged or decayed, as it serves to restore the tooth's shape, size, strength, and appearance. Crowns are used to fully encase a tooth that has suffered extensive wear, cracks, or cavities, essentially providing a protective layer and enhancing functionality. This procedure often follows treatments like root canals or when a large filling is needed, as it helps to prevent further damage and maintain oral health. In contrast, whitening teeth, performing routine check-ups, and placing dental implants are distinct dental procedures that do not involve crowning a tooth. Whitening focuses on improving the color of teeth, check-ups are preventive measures to assess overall dental health, and dental implants are restorative solutions that replace missing teeth rather than repairing existing ones.

3. What is the role of a dental lab technician?

A. To create dental prosthetics, crowns, and bridges based on dentists' specifications

B. To clean and polish teeth during patient visits

C. To replace missing teeth with dental implants

D. To administer medications to patients

The role of a dental lab technician primarily revolves around the fabrication of dental prosthetics, crowns, bridges, and other dental appliances based on the precise specifications provided by dentists. They utilize a variety of materials and techniques to ensure that the finished products meet both functional and aesthetic requirements, which are critical for patient satisfaction and dental health. Dental lab technicians work behind the scenes and typically do not have direct patient interaction. Their expertise is vital in the overall dental care process, as they meticulously create customized dental solutions tailored to the unique needs of individual patients. This involves interpreting dentists' prescriptions and using various technologies, including digital impressions and CAD/CAM systems, to design and manufacture the dental devices. In contrast, the other options mention roles that are outside the scope of a dental lab technician's responsibilities. Cleaning and polishing teeth is generally performed by dental hygienists or dentists. Replacing missing teeth with dental implants is a task that falls under the purview of oral surgeons or general dentists, as it involves surgical procedures. Administering medications to patients is also the responsibility of a licensed healthcare provider, typically a dentist or physician. Thus, the primary function of a dental lab technician is specifically centered on crafting dental prosthetics and appliances in a laboratory setting.

4. What is the best definition of the philtrum?

A. The area above the upper lip

B. The median groove on the external surface of the lip

C. The bottom part of the lip

D. A groove along the chin

The philtrum is best defined as the median groove on the external surface of the lip. This anatomical feature runs vertically from the base of the nose to the upper lip, distinguishing it as a notable characteristic of human facial anatomy. The depth and shape of the philtrum can vary among individuals, contributing to the unique appearance of the mouth and face. Understanding the philtrum's precise location and structure is important in fields like dentistry and facial aesthetics, as it can influence various procedures, including cosmetic surgery and orthodontics. Recognizing this anatomical landmark helps professionals assess facial symmetry and plan effective treatment strategies. The other options mention locations or features that do not accurately represent the definition of the philtrum. For instance, the area above the upper lip refers to a broader region, while the bottom part of the lip and a groove along the chin describe features that are clearly distinct from the philtrum. These distinctions underscore the importance of precise terminology in clinical practice.

5. What is the best way to avoid aspiration of a tooth or root during a procedure?

- A. Using a larger instrument
- B. Proper instrument handling**
- C. Administering more anesthesia
- D. Removing all saliva before starting

Proper instrument handling is crucial to avoid aspiration of a tooth or root during dental procedures. This involves maintaining a firm grip on the instruments and manipulating them with precision. When instruments are handled correctly, the likelihood of dropping or inadvertently allowing a tooth fragment or root to enter the airway is significantly reduced. Effective instrument handling includes understanding the appropriate techniques for extraction, maintaining control over the working field, and being aware of the patient's positioning and the surrounding anatomy. By employing these best practices, practitioners can minimize risks associated with aspiration and ensure a safer environment for the patient during procedures. In contrast, while using a larger instrument may seem like it could decrease aspiration risk, it could actually complicate the procedure or interfere with the delicate structures in the mouth. Administering more anesthesia does not directly influence the control over instruments, and removing saliva, while important for visibility, does not prevent movement of objects into the airway. Thus, proper instrument handling remains the most effective strategy for preventing aspiration.

6. What characterizes aphthous ulcers?

- A. Painless sores on the gums
- B. Very painful and movable tissue**
- C. Require surgical removal
- D. Only occur in children

Aphthous ulcers, also known as canker sores, are characterized by their painful nature and their occurrence on soft tissues in the mouth. They manifest as small, shallow lesions that can make eating, talking, and even swallowing uncomfortable due to their sensitivity. The description of being "very painful and movable tissue" aligns well with these features, as the lesions can occur on movable mucosa, such as the inside of the lips, cheeks, or under the tongue, which increases discomfort when these areas are used for routine activities. While it is true that the ulcers are often painless when they are first developing, the subsequent irritation and exposure to food and oral movements contribute to their known painful experience. Additionally, aphthous ulcers do not generally require surgical removal, as they tend to heal on their own within one to two weeks, thus ruling out the need for any surgical intervention. Furthermore, these ulcers are not exclusive to children; they can affect individuals of any age. Thus, the choice that best captures the defining trait of aphthous ulcers is the one indicating their painful and movable characteristics.

7. Which of the following is NOT one of the major muscles of mastication?

- A. Masseter**
- B. Temporalis**
- C. Medial Pterygoid**
- D. Deltoid**

The deltoid muscle is not one of the major muscles of mastication. The primary role of the muscles of mastication is to facilitate the movements necessary for chewing and grinding food, which are essential functions associated with the jaw. The masseter, temporalis, and medial pterygoid are all specifically involved in these activities. The masseter is responsible for elevating the mandible, which allows for the powerful closing of the jaw. The temporalis muscle also assists in elevating the mandible, while contributing to the retraction of the jaw. The medial pterygoid works alongside these muscles to help in both the elevation and side-to-side movements of the jaw during chewing. In contrast, the deltoid muscle is primarily associated with the shoulder and upper arm. Its primary function is to enable arm movements such as lifting and overhead reaching, making it unrelated to the mastication process. Thus, it is clearly the muscle that does not belong to the group responsible for chewing.

8. What does the acronym "ADA" stand for in dental practice?

- A. American Dental Association**
- B. American Dental Alliance**
- C. American Dentists Association**
- D. American Dental Association of Professionals**

The acronym "ADA" stands for the American Dental Association. This organization plays a critical role in the field of dentistry in the United States. Founded in 1859, the ADA is the largest and oldest dental organization, representing dentists and promoting oral health. It provides resources for dental professionals, advocates for public health policies, and sets standards for dental education and practice. The American Dental Association's mission includes promoting the value of dentistry, advancing the practice of dentistry, and improving the oral health of the public. Its resources include clinical guidelines, research, and continuing education opportunities that are beneficial for dental practitioners. The other options, while they may sound plausible, do not accurately represent the well-established organization that the ADA refers to in dental contexts. There is no recognized entity for the American Dental Alliance or the American Dentists Association as major players in the field. Similarly, the phrasing "American Dental Association of Professionals" does not reflect the official name of the ADA. Understanding this correct designation is crucial for navigating discussions and literature related to dental practices and policies.

9. What type of bristles should toothbrushes have for effective cleaning?

- A. Hard**
- B. Medium**
- C. Soft**
- D. Extra soft**

For effective cleaning, toothbrushes should have soft bristles. Soft bristles are gentle on the gums and enamel while still being effective in removing plaque and debris from the teeth. They are less likely to cause damage to the gums and can help prevent issues such as gum recession and sensitivity. Research has shown that soft bristles can effectively clean teeth without the risk of injuring the oral soft tissues. This is particularly important for individuals with sensitive gums or those who may brush too vigorously. When using a toothbrush with soft bristles, proper technique is essential; a gentle circular motion is recommended to ensure effective cleaning without causing harm. While medium and hard bristles may seem like they would provide a more vigorous cleaning, they can lead to enamel abrasion and gum irritation over time, making soft bristles the preferable choice for both daily use and long-term dental health. Extra soft bristles are designed for individuals with specific dental issues or sensitivity, but for the general population, soft bristles strike the right balance between comfort and cleaning efficacy.

10. How is a periodontal abscess best defined?

- A. Occurring in shallow pockets**
- B. Located in dentin**
- C. Usually found in pockets greater than 7mm with pain and swelling**
- D. Always associated with gum recession**

A periodontal abscess is best defined as a localized infection in the supporting structures of the teeth, typically associated with periodontal disease. The defining characteristics usually include the presence of deep periodontal pockets, often greater than 7mm, which can harbor bacteria and lead to infection. This infection typically manifests with symptoms such as pain and swelling, making option C the most accurate description. In cases of a periodontal abscess, the involvement of deep pockets indicates significant periodontal tissue destruction and contributes to the acute nature of the abscess, along with its painful presentation. Understanding that this condition arises in areas with severe periodontal issues clarifies the critical connection between pocket depth, inflammation, and the risk of abscess formation. The other choices do not align with the typical presentation of a periodontal abscess. Shallow pockets wouldn't generally lead to the large, localized infection that characterizes an abscess. Locations within dentin pertain more specifically to dental caries or pulpal conditions rather than periodontal abscesses. Lastly, while gum recession may accompany periodontal disease, it is not a definitive factor for the definition of a periodontal abscess itself.

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://sfmsdental.examzify.com>

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

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