



# PCT Certification

## Test Taking Skills & Sample Questions

# Intellectual Preparation

- Review a test blueprint for content of exam
- Find out which content areas have the most questions
- Review material included on test
- Focus on areas where you are least familiar

# Intellectual Preparation

- Consider taking an online practice exam
- Attend a review class
- Review references i.e. Core Curriculum
- Participate in a study group
- Listen to the directions given the day of exam and follow exactly

# Emotional Preparation

- Moderate anxiety is normal
- Study and prepare for the exam so that you feel confident
- Think positively
- Use anxiety-reducing strategies
  - Relaxation response
  - Guided imagery
  - Exercise
  - Prayer

# Emotional Preparation

- Don't become too worried if you aren't sure about some of the answers. No one answers all of the questions correctly.
- Don't become anxious or impatient if you see other test takers finish the exam early. Use as much of the allotted time as you need.

# Physical Preparation

- Get a good night's sleep
- Eat before the test
- Gather all materials you need to take to the test the night before:
  - Government issued photo ID
  - Exam permit
  - Sweater or jacket, in case the room is cool

# Physical Preparation

- Allow plenty of time so you arrive early
- If you think you might be easily distracted by people leaving the room, select a seat at the front of the room

# Tips on Answering Questions

- Read the questions carefully and focus on key words in the questions such as “first,” “most likely,” “most important,” “best.” These words are usually printed in boldface type to attract your attention.
- As you read the question, anticipate what the correct answer will be.



# More Test Tips

- Read each of the four choices carefully. Even if the first option sounds correct, read all options before choosing the answer.
- Do not “read into” the question. Answer the question based only on the information presented, even if you think the answer is too obvious or too easy.

# More Test Tips

- Do not be afraid to change an answer. Research has shown that more often than not, test takers change answers to the correct one.
- Do not spend too much time on any one question. Make a note of the questions of which you are uncertain and return to them later if you have time.
- If you are unsure about one of the content areas, you might consider leaving that for last.

# Tactics

- Watch for absolutes & qualifiers
- Look for grammatical clues
- Look for familiar phrases
- Look for degrees of correctness
- Make educated guesses
- Don't leave any blanks
- Look for clue words or numbers

# Tactics

Note Negatives:

- “none”
- “not”
- “never” or
- “neither”

# Tactics

Note superlatives such as:

- “every”
- “all”
- “none”
- “always”
- “only”

# Tactics

Note qualifying words:

- “usually”
- “often”
- “generally”
- “may” &
- “seldom”

# In-Test Strategies

- Preview the examination
- Start with questions you can answer readily
- Recycle through the test
- Choose the closest answer
- Eliminate unlikely answers
- Set goals for time & pace yourself accordingly

# In-Test Strategies

- Read the questions carefully
- Circle or underline key words & questions
- Try to recall a concept from memory
- Consider the cover-up strategy
- Consider the true/false label strategy



# In-Test Strategies

- Sometimes alternatives differ by only one or two words
- Use the hint of highly similar pairs
- Be prepared to change your answer
- Be alert to terminology which links

# In-Test Strategies

- Be wary of descriptive words
- Translate double negative statements
- If you must...guess

# Sample Questions

1. Which of the following best describes the reason for wearing gloves when handling blood?

- a) patient comfort
- b) asepsis
- c) universal precautions
- d) HIV

2. You test for sterilant levels in a hemodialysis machine prior to patient use. The test is positive for sterilant. This means the machine:

- a) is sterile & bacteria free
- b) needs further rinsing
- c) needs more sterilant
- d) is in conductivity

# Sample Questions

3. Choose the correct statement regarding serum abnormalities in renal failure:

- a) creatinine, BUN, & phosphorus are elevated
- b) creatinine, BUN, & phosphorus are depressed
- c) calcium & bicarbonate are elevated
- d) calcium & bicarbonate are depressed

4. Hemodialysis requires a means to channel the patient's blood to the hemodialyzer & then back to the body. It's called:

- a) vascular access
- b) hemodialyzer
- c) dialyzing fluid delivery system
- d) infusion pump

# Sample Questions

5. Which of the following is correct regarding a fistula?

- a) usually created in the leg, near the ankle
- b) usually created in the forearm, near the wrist
- c) are made of salastic tubing
- d) none of the above

6. Blood leak detectors are extremely sensitive & can determine:

- a) blood type
- b) amount of blood loss
- c) blood leakage immediately
- d) volume changes
- e) serum potassium levels

# Sample Questions

7. Which of the following foods are high in potassium?

- a) milk, ice cream, yogurt
- b) legumes, cheese, pizza
- c) chips, colas, canned meat
- d) bananas, tomatoes, oranges

8. What lab values are monitored for assessing bone disease?

- a) calcium, phosphorus & PTH
- b) calcium, phosphorus & albumin
- c) calcium, phosphorus & potassium
- d) calcium, phosphorus & magnesium

# Sample Questions

9. Which is the most common cause of chronic kidney failure in the US?

- a) diabetes
- b) hypertension
- c) polycystic kidney disease
- d) glomerulonephritis

10. The reason potassium dialyzes and RBC's do not is:

- a) potassium has a larger molecular weight
- b) potassium has a smaller molecular weight
- c) RBC's are not water soluble
- d) RBC's have a negative charge

# Sample Questions

11. Acceptable limits for total chlorines in water for hemodialysis are?

- a) less than 0.1mg/L (ppm)
- b) 0.5 mg/L to 1 mg/L (ppm)
- c) 3.5 mg/L to 5.5 mg/L to 5.5 mg/L (ppm)
- d) greater than 6.0 mg/L (ppm)

12. If a new patient starts with a very high BUN, dialysis is purposely made less efficient to prevent:

- a) rapid decrease in hct
- b) dialysis disequilibrium syndrome
- c) cardiac arrhythmia's
- d) excessive coagulation



# Sample Questions

13. The following are factors in poor clearance during dialysis except:

- a) poor dialyzer reuse
- b) access recirculation
- c) low hematocrit
- d) low blood flow rate

14. The movement of water from an area of low solute concentration to an area of high solute concentration is called:

- a) diffusion
- b) osmosis
- c) ultrafiltration
- d) dialysis

# Sample Questions

15. Potting compound, casing, fibers and headers are part of a:

- a) dialysis machine
- b) water treatment system
- c) R. O. system
- d) dialyzer

16. Mr. Jones has a dry weight of 72 kg. He weighed 73 kg after last treatment. Today he weighs 75.5 kg. Assume prime and rinse back = 500 ml total. What is Mr. Jones' fluid removal goal for today?

- a) 2.5 liters or 2500 ml
- b) 3.0 liters or 3000 ml
- c) 4.0 liters or 4000 ml
- d) 4.5 liters or 4500 ml

# Sample Questions

17. A hematocrit test indicates which of the following?

- a) concentration of platelets in the blood
- b) concentration of creatinine in the blood
- c) concentration of red blood cells in the blood
- d) concentration of white blood cells in the blood

18. What factors should be considered when establishing a patient's dry weight?

- a) blood pressure
- b) patient well being
- c) evidence of dehydration or fluid overload
- d) all of the above

# Sample Questions

19. In a dialysis machine, the proportioning system does what?

- a) prepare the dialysate to the proper pH
- b) warm the dialysate to the proper temperature
- c) appropriately mix the dialysate concentrates with water
- d) to monitor the dialysate flow rate

20. The complication in which blood has a “cherry pop” appearance is:

- a) blood leak
- b) air embolism
- c) hemolysis
- d) none of the above

# Sample Questions

21. The use of high sodium dialysate may predispose a patient to:

- a) fluid overload
- b) hypertension
- c) thirst
- d) all of the above

22. The capability of a dialyzer to remove fluid, expressed as ml/mmHg/hr is:

- a) UF Coefficient
- b) clearance
- c) surface area
- d) priming volume

# Sample Questions

23. A pre-pump arterial pressure reading is measuring:

- a) the pressure required to pump the blood through the dialyzer
- b) resistance to blood flow out of the access
- c) pressure within the dialyzer
- d) none of the above

24. What determines the surface area of a hollow fiber dialyzer?

- a) number of fibers
- b) internal diameter of fibers
- c) length of fibers
- d) all of the above

# Sample Questions

25. The purpose of using counter-current flow is to:

- a) increase the rate of fluid removal
- b) increase the rate of waste removal
- c) decrease the amount of dialysate used
- d) decrease the surface area of the membrane

26. Chloramine exposure in dialysis can result in:

- a) hypernatremia
- b) hemolysis
- c) pericarditis
- d) bleeding

# Sample Questions

27. Part of the reuse process involves the reuse machine testing the dialyzer to verify:

- a) the dialyzer is free of sterilant
- b) the dialyzer is free of bacteria
- c) the dialyzer is free of endotoxins
- d) the dialyzer fibers are free of leaks

28. According to AAMI RD52, what is the maximum allowable level of bacteria in dialysate?

- a) 1,000 CFU's
- b) 50 CFU's
- c) 200 CFU's
- d) 500 CFU's



# Sample Questions

29. According to AAMI RD52, how often should bacterial cultures be sampled?

- a) weekly
- b) monthly
- c) quarterly
- d) annually

30. According to AAMI RD52, what is the action level for bacteria in dialysate?

- a) 50 CFU's
- b) 75 CFU's
- c) 100 CFU's
- d) 200 CFU's

# Sample Questions

31. Bacterial exposure from water may cause which of the following symptoms?

- a) hemolysis
- b) fever/chills
- c) bone disease
- d) hypotension

32. Who developed the first permanent blood access, the “Shunt”

- a) Scribner and Quinton
- b) Kolff
- c) Brescia and Cimino
- d) Turner

# Sample Questions

33. Venous pressure meters are calibrated in:

- a) PSI
- b) mm/Hg
- c) mL/hour
- d) mg%

34. TPM is measured as:

- a) mL/hr
- b) mm/Hg
- c) mL/min
- d) none of the above

# Sample Questions

35. The hemodialysis machine continuously monitors many parameters. Which of these parameters must be verified by an external measuring device?

- a) blood flow
- b) dialysate flow
- c) pH and conductivity
- d) temperature and transmembrane pressure

36. Prior to each patient shift, it would be essential to perform a water quality check for which of these substances?

- a) calcium and magnesium
- b) chlorine and chloramine
- c) organic contaminants
- d) inorganic contaminants

# Sample Questions

37. The term pH is a measurement of the concentration of:

- a) all ions in solution
- b) hydrogen ions
- c) bicarbonate ions
- d) acetate ions

38. The technician's role in patient teaching should be to:

- a) assess the patient's barriers to learning
- b) check the patient's readiness to learn new information
- c) determine the patient's learning needs
- d) Reinforce teaching that the patient has received from other team members

# Sample Questions

39. What can dialysis staff do to reduce the risk of being infected with a blood borne pathogen?

- a) proper hand washing
- b) universal precautions
- c) proper sharps disposal
- d) all of the above

40. Which of the following are ways to handle chemicals safely?

- a) wash hands before eating or drinking
- b) wear protective clothing
- c) don't eat or drink in the work area
- d) all of the above

# Sample Questions

41. What is the correct angle in which to cannulate a fistula?

- a) 10-15 degrees
- b) 25-35 degrees
- c) 35-45 degrees
- d) it does not matter

42. Which of the following affects access recirculation?

- a) distance between the tips of the needles
- b) presence of stenosis
- c) direction of needles
- d) all of the above

# Sample Questions

43. The technician observes that the hardness reading after the water softener is above the acceptable limit. The technician should check the softener tank's level of:

- a) salt
- b) chlorine
- c) carbon
- d) sand

44. A technician observes all of the following in the hemodialysis unit. Which one poses an environmental risk?

- a) the wheels of the hemodialysis machines are locked
- b) charts are lying on bedside tables
- c) about one ounce (30 ml) of fluid is on the floor
- d) a patient's family member is present during treatment



# Sample Questions

45. When preparing a bleach solution for cleaning equipment, the technician accidentally spills undiluted bleach on the floor. Which of these resources will provide the technician with information about how to properly handle the spill of the chemical?

- a) Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)
- b) Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)
- c) Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI)
- d) State Department of Health (DOH)

46. A conductivity alarm sounds during a hemodialysis treatment. The technician should expect which of these events to have occurred?

- a) the blood pump has stopped
- b) the dialysate flow rate has increased
- c) the electrical power source was interrupted
- d) the dialyzer was bypassed

# Sample Questions

47. During routine water testing, the technician notes that the chloramine level after the first carbon tank is 0.2mg/L. Which of these actions should the technician take next?

- a) bypass the carbon tanks
- b) descale the reverse osmosis membranes
- c) obtain a sample after the second carbon tank
- d) immediately terminate hemodialysis treatments

48. A female technician has been caring for a male patient for several months. The patient tells the technician that he is lonely and depressed. He asks the technician to go out to dinner with him. In addition to politely declining the patient's invitation, which of these actions, if any, should be taken:

- a) refer the patient to the social worker
- b) recommend an over-the-counter mood stimulant, such as St. John's wort
- c) share the patient's need for socialization with other patients
- d) no further action is needed

# Sample Questions

49. A hemodialysis technician suspects that a patient who is receiving a hemodialysis treatment has an air embolus. After stopping the blood pump, the patient should be placed in which of these positions?

- a) low-fowlers
- b) high-fowlers
- c) right-sided trendelenberg
- d) left-sided trendelenberg

50. During hemodialysis a patient goes into cardiac arrest. Which of these actions should be taken first?

- a) apply a precordial thump to the patient
- b) call for help
- c) return the patient's blood
- d) stop ultrafiltration

# Answer Key

- |       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C  | 14. B | 27. D | 40. D |
| 2. B  | 15. D | 28. C | 41. B |
| 3. A  | 16. C | 29. B | 42. D |
| 4. A  | 17. C | 30. A | 43. A |
| 5. B  | 18. D | 31. B | 44. C |
| 6. C  | 19. C | 32. A | 45. A |
| 7. D  | 20. C | 33. B | 46. D |
| 8. A  | 21. D | 34. B | 47. C |
| 9. A  | 22. A | 35. C | 48. A |
| 10. B | 23. B | 36. B | 49. D |
| 11. A | 24. D | 37. B | 50. B |
| 12. B | 25. B | 38. C |       |
| 13. C | 26. B | 39. D |       |