Home Health RN Exam Content Outline

Exam Objective: To measure the overall level of clinical knowledge required for the RN working in the Home Health Care setting.

Each question in this assessment is categorized by a cognitive level that the test taker would likely use to respond. These categories are:

- **Recall**: The ability to recall or recognize specific information.
- **Application**: The ability to comprehend, relate or apply knowledge to new or changing situations.
- **Analysis**: The ability to analyze and synthesize information, determine solutions and/or evaluate the usefulness of a solution.

### Knowledge Domains:

- **Cardiovascular/Pulmonary**: 9%
- **Endocrine/GI**: 9%
- **General Knowledge**: 6%
- **Integumentary/Wound/Ortho**: 11%
- **Interdisciplinary Communication**: 6%
- **Neurological**: 9%
- **Patient Education**: 8%
- **Pharmacology**: 9%
- **Professional/Ethical Issues**: 12%
- **Psychosocial & Communication**: 6%
- **Renal/Genitourinary**: 8%
- **Safety**: 9%

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I. Cardiovascular/Pulmonary

A. Knowledge of common abbreviations used in the medical record to document assessment findings, such as PERRLA, A&O, I&O, etc.

B. Knowledge of anatomical landmarks throughout the body used for cardiovascular assessment and documentation purposes, such as radial pulse, carotid pulse, dorsalis pedis pulse, etc.

C. Knowledge of how to perform a comprehensive cardiovascular assessment on the home health patient, including the recognition of normal and abnormal findings (heart sounds, etc.).

D. Knowledge of acute and chronic respiratory disorders commonly seen in the home health setting, including pneumonia, COPD, asthma, etc. Includes symptoms typically found in patients with chronic oxygen deficiency.

E. Knowledge of acute and chronic cardiovascular commonly seen in the home health setting, and appropriate interventions during acute symptomatic episodes, such as heart failure, hypertension, etc.

F. Knowledge of typical treatment protocol for a patient with CAD who is experiencing acute chest pain.

G. Knowledge of interventions for patients with acute vascular issues and atherosclerosis, such as loss of pulse in lower extremities, pulmonary emboli, etc.

H. Knowledge of common signs/symptoms of acute pulmonary embolism.

I. Knowledge of nursing interventions for patients with acute syncope, dizziness, and hypotension.

J. Knowledge of signs/symptoms of thrombocytopenia secondary to chemotherapy patients.

K. Knowledge of anticoagulant therapy, including INR checks, and when to report significant findings.
II. Endocrine/Gastrointestinal

A. Knowledge of common post-operative interventions and techniques to facilitate GI motility.

B. Knowledge of Type 1 and 2 diabetes, including clinical presentation, treatments for each, and signs/symptoms of hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia.

C. Knowledge of diabetic diets, including which foods to encourage and which foods should be avoided.

D. Knowledge of the HbA1c laboratory test for diabetic patients and what information is important to include in patient education.

E. Knowledge of colostomy and ileostomy care, including normal and abnormal assessment findings in a patient who is post-op ostomy placement.

F. Knowledge of common assessment findings in patient with upper or lower GI bleed.

G. Knowledge of enteral feeding pumps, including how and when to troubleshoot and common interventions to correct issues with such pumps and/or tubes.

H. Knowledge of the signs/symptoms of post-operative dehiscence in a patient with a hemicolecotomy.

I. Knowledge of aspiration precautions, particularly in regard to the patient with a G-tube.

III. Integumentary/Wound/Orthopedic

A. Knowledge of wound staging and pressure injuries, including how to properly assess a wound, including the health of tissue and surrounding areas of skin.

B. Knowledge of negative pressure wound devices, such as a WoundVac, how the device is applied, monitored, and adjusted when necessary per provider order.

C. Knowledge of signs/symptoms of infection at surgical sites.

D. Knowledge of patient conditions and other factors that contribute to being high risk for pressure injury or skin breakdown.
E. Knowledge of debriding agents commonly used in patients with wounds in the home health setting.

F. Knowledge of assessment findings commonly associated with arterial ulcers.

IV. Interdisciplinary Communication

A. Knowledge of hand-off communication, including when to provide report, information to include in communication, etc.

B. Knowledge of components included in the home health patient’s plan of care, including care provided by interdisciplinary team members, anticipated date of discharge and number of skilled visits.

C. Knowledge of conditions that should be reported to other members of the health care team prior to procedures, such as food and drug allergies.

D. Knowledge of sequence of actions when creating and organizing a patient’s plan of care, including but not limited to assessment, planning, evaluation, etc.

E. Knowledge of how disease and conditions are sequenced on the problem list of the nursing care plan for the home health patient.

F. Knowledge of how to appropriately document assessment findings related to proper hand-off communication between health care professionals and providers involved in the care of the home health patient.

V. Neurological

A. Knowledge of the signs/symptoms of acute CVA, altered LOC, seizure, etc. and when these constitute an emergency and/or calling 911.

B. Knowledge of assessment findings associated with left or right-sided hemiparesis.


D. Knowledge of signs/symptoms of acute neurological dysfunction or impairment in the elderly population.

E. Knowledge of the F.A.S.T. assessment scale and its use in the patient with
suspected CVA.

F. Knowledge of signs/symptoms commonly seen in patients diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and topics to include in patient teaching related to disease process.

G. Knowledge of secondary diagnoses commonly seen in patients with primary diagnosis of glioblastoma.

H. Knowledge of personnel that should be consulted in a patient with Parkinson’s disease and limited functional mobility.

VI. Psychosocial & Communication

A. Knowledge of how to encourage patient and their family to verbalize their feelings about health conditions, diagnoses, etc. and support their stage of acceptance, denial, rejection, etc. through therapeutic communication.

B. Knowledge of bipolar disorder, including the characteristics commonly seen in depressive and manic episodes.

C. Knowledge of the stages of grief, including anger, acceptance, denial, etc.

D. Knowledge of signs/symptoms of depression in a patient, including physical, environmental, and affect as it relates to the home health setting.

E. Knowledge of interventions that may be helpful in the patient with dementia and unexplained/inappropriate behaviors.

VII. Renal/Genitourinary

A. Knowledge of nephrostomy tube, including normal and abnormal assessment findings related to the tube, site, and care/interventions used in the treatment of these.

B. Knowledge of common signs/symptoms of urinary tract infection and when such symptoms should be reported to a provider and interventions performed by the nurse to confirm diagnosis of UTI.

C. Knowledge of foods that should be avoided in a patient diagnosed with chronic kidney disease.
D. Knowledge of common post-operative assessment findings in a patient with a TURP procedure.

E. Knowledge of how to troubleshoot issues with indwelling urinary catheters, such as irrigation, changing device, etc.

F. Knowledge of common assessment findings in the patient with renal failure, including which findings would indicate or contraindicate the need for hemodialysis.

G. Knowledge of AV fistulas, including assessment findings that should be reviewed by the nurse in their overall assessment.

H. Knowledge of signs/symptoms of acute renal failure.

VIII. General Knowledge

A. Knowledge of therapeutic communication techniques used with patients, families, and co-workers, including how to de-escalate situations.

B. Knowledge of normal and abnormal laboratory values as it relates to diagnostic testing, including when such results should be reported to the patient’s provider, such as critical potassium levels, high glucose, high digoxin levels, etc.

C. Knowledge of how to keep home health supplies, such as the nursing bag and other items in a clean place in the patient’s home.

D. Knowledge of how to prioritize the home health assignment each day based upon acuity and medical condition of each patient assigned.

E. Knowledge of how to best assess skin turgor in the elderly patient.

F. Knowledge of common signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction to a vaccination, immunization, and/or injection, including signs of anaphylaxis.

G. Knowledge of common signs and symptoms of a cerebrovascular accident.

H. Knowledge of how to convert a patient’s height from inches/feet to centimeters and vice versa.

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I. Knowledge of BLS, including the Heimlich maneuver, and indications for the use of interventions during patient emergencies.

J. Knowledge of interventions used to treat mild hypo- and hypernatremia.

IX. Patient Education

A. Knowledge of how to promote learning in the patient and/or family through the use of therapeutic communication.

B. Knowledge of how to teach patients about signs and symptoms of problems that need attention when diagnosed with CHF, such as sudden weight gain over a short period of time, acute respiratory distress, etc.

C. Knowledge of interventions that should be taught to the patient with BLE edema when diagnosed with lymphedema.

D. Knowledge of events that require a patient to call their primary care provider, pharmacy, or other care provider, such as medication discrepancies, misunderstanding about treatments, etc.

E. Knowledge of components that should be included in the patient’s education while taking low-molecular weight heparin injections, such as enoxaparin.

F. Knowledge of components of dietary teaching that should be given to the home health patient with an ostomy, including foods that produce high volume of flatus.

G. Knowledge of components of dietary teaching that should be given to the home health patient diagnosed with CHF, including high sodium foods.

H. Knowledge of diabetic teaching that should be included in the diabetic patient, including A1C, dietary considerations, low carbohydrates, etc.

I. Knowledge of dietary recommendations and restrictions that should be taught to patients with a variety of medical conditions, disease processes, and medication regimens, such as iron deficiency anemia, warfarin therapy, etc.
J. Knowledge of communicable diseases and how to educate patients on their etiology, such as tuberculosis, C-Diff, MRSA, influenza, etc.

K. Knowledge in how to teach children the proper technique in using respiratory inhaler and how to evaluate effectiveness of teaching.

L. Knowledge of 24-hour urine collection, including the procedure for discarding/collecting specimens.

M. Knowledge of Helicobacter pylori and what information should be included in the education to the patient who has been diagnosed with the condition.

X. Pharmacology

A. Knowledge of TB skin tests, including appropriate timeframe for reading results after placement of test.

B. Knowledge of anticoagulant medication, including the side effects, laboratory tests, and antidotes associated with each.

C. Knowledge of Schedule IV medications, including common ordering protocol, prescription refill protocol, etc.

D. Knowledge of commonly prescribed antibiotics in the ambulatory setting, including dosage, side effects, and contraindications for each.

E. Knowledge of medications commonly administered for treatment of respiratory conditions, such as bronchodilators, steroids, etc., including indications for these medications, side effects, and how to assess for effectiveness.

F. Knowledge of medications that are contraindicated immediately after a patient has undergone a cardiac catheterization.

G. Knowledge of a variety of vaccinations and immunizations used in all age populations, including influenza vaccination, measles, mumps, rubella, Hepatitis B, Gardasil, etc., as well as indications for administration, side effects, allergies that contraindicate the administration of certain vaccines, etc.

H. Knowledge of the Z-Track method of injections, including the most commonly administered medications using this method.
I. Knowledge of signs and symptoms commonly seen in patients experiencing withdrawal from narcotic analgesics, benzodiazepines, stimulants, etc.

J. Knowledge of medications that are contraindicated in a patient with an allergy to penicillin and/or sulfa drugs.

K. Knowledge of common side effects after oral antibiotic therapy.

L. Knowledge of SSRI therapy, including common side effects, time needed for therapeutic serum level, anticipated responses to medications in this category, etc.

M. Knowledge of a variety of medications commonly used to treat hypertension and cardiac arrhythmias including ace inhibitors, beta blockers, diuretics, etc.

N. Knowledge of positive inotropes, including indications for use, pharmacokinetics, side effects, and how to monitor for therapeutic levels.

O. Knowledge of signs/symptoms of adverse reaction to IV Vancomycin therapy and interventions to treat. Includes the symptoms of Vancomycin toxicity.

P. Knowledge of extended-release tablets, including parameters surrounding administration when needed to be given through a G-tube.

Q. Knowledge of proton pump inhibitors, antacids, and H2 blockers and indications for each.

R. Knowledge of when to draw peak and trough levels as it relates to therapeutic administration of Vancomycin.

S. Knowledge of education that should be provided to patients who are taking steroid inhalers, such as oral hygiene, etc.

T. Knowledge of how to perform mathematical calculations and conversions as it relates to medication administration using a variety of formulas, including but not limited to the following:
Dose Calculation Formula:

\[
\text{dose ordered} \times \frac{\text{volume available}}{\text{dose available}} = \text{dose to administer}
\]

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XI. Safety

A. Knowledge of infection control and different types of isolation including standard, contact, droplet, and airborne.

B. Knowledge of personal protective equipment and the types of equipment required for each type of isolation precautions.

C. Knowledge of functional assessments and how to complete, specifically during meal time.

D. Knowledge of medical conditions associated with each type of isolation precautions, such as tuberculosis, influenza, C-Diff, etc.

E. Knowledge of hand hygiene, including proper technique, when to perform, and use of antibacterial foams/gels.

F. Knowledge of safety precautions that she be taught to the patient and implemented in the home as it relates to oxygen therapy and cigarette smoking.

G. Knowledge of adaptive equipment and other medical equipment used by patients in the home health setting to assist with ambulation and transfers. Includes general knowledge of how to encourage patient when such equipment should be used as opposed to other methods.

H. Knowledge of MRSA infection and route(s) of transmission.
I. Knowledge of donning sterile gown, gloves, mask, etc. and events that would compromise sterility of PPE or equipment.

J. Knowledge of nursing diagnoses commonly applied in the home health patient with altered perception, agitation, and acute confusion.

XII. Professional/Ethical Issues

A. Knowledge of cultural diversity including techniques for demonstrating sensitivity to various cultures, ethnicities, age groups, etc. and how to adjust care based upon these diversities.

B. Knowledge of ways to prevent the unintentional disclosure of protected patient information and maintaining confidentiality of such information.

C. Knowledge of HIPAA privacy guidelines, including when patient information can and cannot be disclosed to a patient’s family members, close friends, and/or neighbors of the home health patient.

D. Knowledge of interpretation services and when it is appropriate to solicit such assistance as it relates to the provision of patient care.

E. Knowledge of how to professionally implement conflict resolution communication techniques to help diffuse escalating conversation between a patient, co-worker, and/or provider.

F. Knowledge of common policies and procedures as it relates to employees use of social media sites and what information should not be posted by any employee, such as patient information, pictures of patients, etc.

G. Knowledge of advance directives, the difference in common types of directives, how to assist a patient in obtaining further information, and how to carry out such directives.

H. Knowledge of signs/symptoms of abuse and neglect, how to conduct an inquiry with the patient, and when/how things should be reported to social services and law enforcement authorities.

I. Knowledge of patient rights, including how to provide/communicate rights to patients with visual or hearing disabilities.

J. Knowledge of situations that may be considered conflicts of interest.

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K. Knowledge of fraud and abuse infractions and their association with criminal and civil liability.

L. Knowledge of the type(s) of gifts that are commonly acceptable for the nurse to receive, as given by a home health patient and/or their family, including gifts that must be refused, such as monetary, free lunch, etc.