

# NCLEX SUCCESS

WHAT YOU NEED  
TO KNOW TO EASILY  
CRUSH THE NCLEX  
ON THE FIRST TRY!



*Chase Hassen*

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Easily Crush the NCLEX on the  
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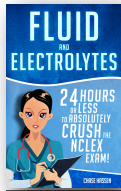
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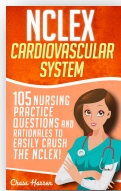
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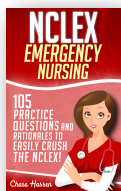
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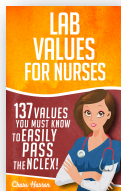
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## **Introduction**

The NCLEX-RN examination is the test prospective RN's must take in order to receive licensure as a registered nurse. The goal of the test is to make sure that the nurse possesses the knowledge and skills to care for patients safely, knowledgeably, and competently at an entry level position as a registered nurse.

The test you will take will be performed on a computer. It is based on questions gathered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), which are based on what a new RN is expected to know at an entry level. The test will give you up to 265 questions. The questions you get are based upon the correctness of the answer you gave before it. The minimum amount of questions you must take is 75. Every test-taker takes his or her own unique test. Few people have to take all 265 questions. The maximum allowable time to take the test is 6 hours. During that time, you must answer every question the computer gives you. There is no penalty for guessing on a question.

During the test, each individual will begin the NCLEX-RN examination with a relatively easy question. If the question is successfully answered, the next test will be considered slightly more difficult than the first. This process goes on with increasingly difficult questions until an item is missed. Once an item is missed, a slightly easier test will be given. This process goes on until a question of lesser difficulty is answered correctly. Then more and more difficult questions are answered as it was in the beginning.

After you have answered 50 percent of the items correctly or incorrectly and have answered a minimum of 75 questions, the computer will determine that you have passed or failed the test. If this happens at the 75-question mark, the test will be over and will be very short. If you have not successfully answered half of the questions at the 75-question mark, the test will go on until you have answered more than fifty percent of the questions correctly. You will not know whether or not you have passed or failed when you have completed the test.

You will be given the opportunity to know in advance of the notification by the Board of Nursing letter, which arrives 2-4 weeks after taking the test. There is a small fee to find out in advance by phone or internet. If you find out early that you failed to pass the test, you need to wait until the official word arrives in the mail in order to find out your diagnostic profile. It will help you in understanding those areas which you need to brush up on when you take the test again. It will also tell you how close you came to passing the exam and the number of questions on the exam that you took. The closer to the full number of 265 questions, the closer you were to passing the test.

The examination is designed to test you on general principles as well as on how you would respond in commonly encountered patient care situations. The focus is on testing

you with questions pertaining to actions and assessments that do not cause patient harm. When preparing for the examination, you must pay attention to those procedures and facts that promote physical and emotional safety as well as protection from iatrogenic conditions and disease complications.

In selecting the questions, those related to a regional bias have been removed and the questions are based on events that happen routinely as part of your job as an RN as well as on the criticality of the information the patient needs.

The questions are broken up into several different cognitive levels. These include the following:

- **Remembering**—basically this is just memorizing a fact, such as a lab value reference range
- **Understanding**—requires an understanding of basic written information, such as “Which foods do you tell the patient are in a high fiber diet?” It requires that you understand which foods are in the category of “high fiber”.
- **Applying**—involves a higher level of critical thinking skills with questions like “What foods would you recommend for a patient with ulcerative colitis?” It requires that you know the basics of ulcerative colitis and know what foods are best for this disorder.
- **Analyzing**—this is when the material is broken into parts that require things like prioritizing the different parts. “Which of the following should be done first?” is one such question.
- **Evaluating**—in which a stand or decision is justified. For example, “Which IV solution is used for the management of hyponatremia?” It requires you to evaluate each answer for its appropriateness in a particular situation.
- **Creating**—this is where the test taker must create a new point of view or new product. An example is: “Which foods can be incorporated in a low-residue diet in a patient with Crohn’s disease?”

As you will see in the next chapter, the above cognitive levels are applied to four main test plan categories and subcategories so that the test has a wide variety of question scenarios to choose from.

## **When to take the Test**

According to research, RN candidates do the best on the examination if they take the test within six months of graduating from a nursing program. For this reason, you should plan to take the exam as soon as you can after you graduate.

## Chapter 1: Test Plan Categories

The NCLEX examination is based on four main test plan categories and multiple subcategories appropriate for an entry level RN. These include the following:

- **Safe and Effective Care Environment**—this carries the subcategories of “Management of Care” and “Safety and infection control”.
- **Health Promotion and Maintenance**—this carries the subcategories including “Growth and Development through the Lifespan” and “The Prevention and Early Detection of Disease”.
- **Psychosocial Integrity**—this includes the subcategories of “Coping and Adaptation” and “Psychosocial Adaptation”.
- **Physiological Integrity**—this includes the subcategories of “Basic Care and Comfort”, “Pharmacological and Parental Therapies”, “Reduction of Risk Potential”, and “Physiological Adaptation”.

In the first category, “Safe and Effective Care Environment”, the focus is on maintaining client/patient safety as well as the safety of the patient’s family and on the healthcare provider. The second major category, Health Promotion and Maintenance, involves providing care to patients and their families while considering their growth and development. In this category, prevention of health problems and promotion of optimal health is important. In the third category, Psychosocial Integrity, you apply principles of providing care to patients with mental or emotional disorders and provide emotional support to their families. Under physiological integrity, the emphasis is on providing basic and advanced nursing practices as they apply to things like giving medications, parenteral therapy and risk reduction.

Each category is represented on the examination, involving anywhere between 24 to 36 percent per category. The subcategories reflect twenty-first century evolving principles, including the topic of delegation and new diseases, including anthrax, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), West Nile Virus and small pox.

Test questions coming from the Health Promotion and Maintenance category will make up about 6-12 percent of all questions. Test questions on psychosocial integrity will make up about 6-12 percent of all questions. Test questions on physiological integrity will involve most of the questions you will receive at between 40 and 64 percent of all questions asked. Psychosocial integrity questions will deal with issues such as body image alterations, changes in family roles, chemical dependency, coping strategies, issues on death and dying, cultural issues, end of life care, crisis management, neglect

and abuse issues, management of behavioral problems, family dynamics, and spiritual issues.

Because physiological integrity issues make up the bulk of questions you will receive, it is a good idea to focus on those areas and study them as they exist in many manuals under different body areas and physiological systems (such as the endocrine system). By studying the systems and body areas separately, you can study the systems as a whole, recognizing the various factors that interplay in the various bodily and physiological areas.

## Chapter 2: Language Basics and Key Words in the Test

It is not enough to know the material well and experience in the field of nursing is not a replacement for studying the test. There are a lot of practicalities and shortcuts done in the practice of nursing that do not apply to a textbook-driven test such as the NCLEX-RN exam.

The question usually sets up a clinical scenario for you and then has a question “stem”. The stem is the part of the question you need to answer. Identifying the stem on difficult questions will lead you to the answer as it applies to the clinical scenario. The stem of the question is usually followed by the various answer choices you will need to look at before making your decision as to the answer or answers.

### Key Words

Most of the questions on the exam will contain key words. These words help direct you to the correct answer. It is a good idea to look at the following list of key words in order to know their implication in the question.

Here is a list of commonly used key words:

First	Appropriate	Late
Priority	Inappropriate	Immediately
Next	Last	Initial
Best	Suitable	Only
Most	Not	After
Least	Early	Every
Expected	Contraindicated	Partial
Unexpected	Independently	Common
Uncommon	Primary	Initially

Knowing the meaning of these words can help you answer the question correctly. For example, look at the following question, identify the key word and decide on an answer:

The nurse is giving IV heparin to the client. What should the nurse do first?

1. Ask the client how he or she is doing
2. Prepare the bag of IV heparin according to instructions at the nurses' station
3. Flush the IV line

#### 4. Check the patient's identity

In this question, all of the answers could be correct; however, the answer 2) is correct because this would be done before all other things are done.

The key words should be identified and underlined when practicing for the test. Note how the key word changes the meaning of the question and how it can best direct you to the proper answer. Not every question will have a key word but, for those that do, the key word is very important to answering the question correctly.

The test is designed so as to eliminate any extraneous information and is designed to be gender neutral and deficient of patient age unless the gender or age is an important part of the question. For example, the patient age would be given if it were pertinent to the question.

### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

Maslow's hierarchy of needs can help you answer questions correctly. The expanded hierarchy of needs consists of eight levels related to the importance of client needs. If there are two equally correct choices, you should select the answer that is closest to the top of the list of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. These include the following:

1. **Biological and Physiological Needs.** These include the very basics, such as food, drink, air, shelter, warmth, sleep, sex, etc.
2. **Safety Needs.** Protection from the elements, law, order, security, stability, etc.
3. **Needs for Love and Belongingness.** Intimacy, friendship, affection, and love while at work, with family, with friends, in a group, and romantic relationships.
4. **Esteem needs.** Having self-esteem, mastery, achievement, status, independence, dominance, managerial responsibility, prestige, etc.
5. **Cognitive needs.** Attaining knowledge, meaning, etc.
6. **Aesthetic needs.** Having balance, form, and an appreciation of beauty, etc.
7. **Self-Actualization needs.** Being able to realize one's personal potential, seeking personal growth and peak experiences, and having self-fulfillment.
8. **Transcendence Needs.** Choosing to help others achieve self-actualization.

### **Taking the Test**

Because the test has no extraneous information, you should be able to identify the scenario and stem within a few seconds. Remember that you have 6 hours to complete

the test so you can take your time identifying the correct answer or answers. On the other hand, do not waste too much time. Set a pace for yourself and stay steady as you answer the questions in the order you receive them. If you waste time and the test shuts down after 6 hours, it is likely that you have not answered enough questions for the test to be passed and will have failed the test. This is why you should carefully read the scenario, stem and the possible answers before selecting the correct answer. Do not over-think the question.

## **Chapter 3: Types of Questions Offered and How to Approach Them**

As the test is done on a computer, a wide variety of questions will be asked of you. While most of the questions will provide you with the question scenario, the stem and four possible answers, of which one is the correct answer, the most recent NCLEX-RN examinations have broadened the types of questions asked. The following are the alternative-format testing questions along with the rationale for answering these types of questions:

### **Fill-in-the-Blank Questions**

These are questions that have a sentence to complete or a calculation to be made that is based on a clinical scenario. The answer is usually in the form of one or two numbers. An example of this would be the following question:

An IV rate is set at 150 cc/hour and the duration of the infusion is 8 hours. How many liters will the patient receive during the 8 hour shift? \_\_\_\_\_ liters

It requires you to calculate  $150 \times 8$ , which equals 1,200 cc or ml. To change ml to liters, you divide this number by 1,000 to get 1.2 liters. You enter the number 1.2 in the blank. There is only one possible answer to fill in the blank and there is no room for ambiguity.

Other fill-in-the-blank questions will ask you to finish a sentence with a number or numbers. An example of this type of question is as follows:

The nurse notes the therapeutic digoxin level to be between the range of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ ng/ml.

The answer to this question requires you to have memorized that the therapeutic range for digoxin, an anti-arrhythmic is 0.5 to 2 ng/ml. You put the number 0.5 in the first blank and the number 2 in the second blank.

Still another type of fill-in-the-blank question requires an understanding of nursing protocols. For example:

A nurse hangs what percent of normal saline through the IV before beginning a blood transfusion?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ percent.

The correct answer is 0.9 percent. It requires that you know that 0.9 percent normal saline is hung in an IV bag before giving a blood transfusion. Just the number '0.9' needs to be entered in the blank space.

At the analyzing level, the fill-in-the-blank question requires that you take the question and divide it into parts that are analyzed as to the relationship between the parts. An example of this would be the following question.

The nurse is comparing one client who is 24 years old with another client who is 71 years old and who sustained a spinal cord injury after an altercation. The nurse recognizes that one of these clients is at a higher risk for spinal cord injury. Who is ii?

Answer: The \_\_\_\_\_ year old client.

The answer you would put in is 24. This is because you have compared two different ages of clients and know that those between 16 and 30 years of age are at a higher risk of spinal cord injury after any type of activity, such as a motorcycle accident, automobile accident, or altercation. You would provide just the number '24' in the blank space.

### **Multiple Response Question**

This is a question for which several correct options must be selected. It can involve answering a question or finishing an incomplete sentence. You will have six options to choose from, each of which will have a square box for you to put an 'x' in on the box. Examples of these types of questions include the following:

1. A nurse is taking care of a client who has diverticulitis. What measures are essential to the client's plan of care?
  1. Increase in the fiber content of the diet.
  2. Bedrest.
  3. Giving antihistamines on a prn basis.
  4. Providing bulk-forming laxatives.
  5. Showing the patient techniques for relaxation.
  6. Providing antibiotic therapy.

Answer: 1, 4, 5. You would put an 'x' mark in those boxes because you would know that a client with diverticulitis needs an increased fiber diet, lessons on relaxation techniques and bulk-forming laxatives.

2. A 2-month old infant has an inguinal hernia. Which of the following signs indicate strangulation of the hernia?
  1. Redness of the scrotum

2. Bradycardia
3. Inconsolable crying
4. Abdominal distension
5. Pain
6. Lethargy

Answer: 1, 3, 5. Your rationale is that signs of a strangulated inguinal hernia in a two month-old infant would be redness of the scrotum, inconsolable crying and an increase in pain.

3. A nurse is taking care of a client who has enuresis and is taking oxybutynin chloride (Ditropan). What should the nurse monitor the client for?
  1. Flushing of the face
  2. Nasal congestion
  3. Diarrhea
  4. Blurry vision
  5. Dry mouth
  6. Nose bleeds

Answer: 1, 4, 5. Your rationale depends on knowing that possible side effects of taking oxybutynin chloride include flushing of the face, constipation, dry mouth, and blurry vision.

### **Auditory Questions**

With these types of questions, there will be an auditory component that the test taker listens to and then responds with one of four possible answers. Examples of these types of questions are these:

1. A nurse is listening to a patient's heart and hears the following audio sounds on auscultation of the heart. What is the nurse hearing?
  1. A split S2
  2. A systolic murmur
  3. A diastolic murmur

#### 4. Normal heart sounds

Answer: The number you select best reflects what you heard on the audio clip. It requires you to have knowledge of normal and abnormal heart sounds and what they sound like.

2. A nurse is listening to the lung sounds in the right base of the lungs on the patient's back. What is the nurse hearing?
  1. Rhonchi
  2. Fine rales
  3. Muffled breath sounds
  4. A friction rub

Answer: The number you select is based upon your knowledge of what the different lung sounds are like and selecting the best possible choice out of four possible responses.

### **Picture or Graph Question**

This alternative type of question will show you a picture or a specific graph and will ask you to identify something on the picture. You may have to supply some data on the graph or identify a "hot spot" on the picture. Examples of this type of question includes the following:

1. A nurse prepares to start an IV in the medial antebrachial vein? Where is this located?

Answer: There will be a picture of the veins of an arm and you will be asked to place an x over the medial antebrachial vein. Alternatively, each vein will have a line which has no label attached to it and the test taker will be asked to write in 'medial antebrachial vein' on the one line that points to the medial antebrachial vein.

2. A nurse is assessing a patient with an aortic systolic murmur. Where can the murmur be heard the loudest?

Answer: There will be a picture of an anterior chest with ribs overlying the chest wall. The test taker will place an 'x' over the spot on the chest wall where the murmur would be heard the loudest. Use the ribs and sternum as landmarks to place your 'x' on the hot spot.

### **Drag and Drop Ordered Response Question**

The problem will have a list of items to be done in any order. In order to answer the problem, you click and drag the responses so that the list on the right of the page (your answer) is in the correct order.

An example of this type of question is as follows:

1. A nurse is preparing to give an opioid medication by IV to a client. In what order does the nurse perform the following tasks?
  1. Confirms the client's identity
  2. Draws up the opioid into a syringe
  3. Cleans the IV port with an alcohol swab
  4. Asks the patient his or her level of pain

Answer: The question is answered by dragging and dropping each statement in the correct order on the right-hand side of the computer screen. In this case, the right-hand side of the screen will have the following list:

4. Asks the patient his or her level of pain.
2. Draws up the opioid into a syringe.
1. Confirms the patient's identity
3. Cleans the IV port with an alcohol swab

### **Exhibit Question**

In this type of question, the test taker is presented with a specific problem and an exhibit in the form of a chart. There will be an exhibit button at the bottom of the screen that needs to be clicked on to reveal information behind each of three different tabs. Then there is a multiple choice question in which the information from the tabs is used to answer the question.

### **Graphic Option Test**

This is like a regular four possible answer test with the exception that each possible answer is a graphic item rather than a text item. You select the graphic item which best answers the question you are given. For example, the question could be like this:

1. The nurse has an EKG strip showing atrial flutter. Which strip indicates this rhythm?

Answer: You will be shown four EKG strips of which one shows atrial flutter. You select the illustration that shows atrial flutter on the EKG strip.

While the test offers a wide variety of questions, most of the questions will be simple, four choice selection questions in which there is only one answer. In order to study for the alternate question test questions, find a book on alternate questions to practice with or select a general question booklet that provides you with more than one type of question format.

## Chapter 4: Content Review

There are different ways to study for the test, but when it comes to content, it helps to divide your studies into various categories involving similar organ systems or body areas. That way, if you take a practice test in a specific area and do well on the practice test, you can assume that you know that area fairly well and do not need to spend much time in that body system. Focus instead on those medical areas that you don't do as well on in practice tests. Study guides vary on what areas of nursing are covered under Medical-Surgical Nursing but each study guide can be helpful to you if they cover all areas of medical-surgical nursing.

### Areas of Study

Some study guides will have a section called **Fundamentals of Nursing**. This covers several basic areas of nursing skills including the following:

- Basic physical care
- Basic psychosocial needs
- Medication and IV administration
- Basic physical assessment

Another area of study is **Medical-Surgical Nursing**. This area is divided into various body systems and physiological systems and provides you with information about each system plus a sample test at the end of each section. Some common areas of study under Medical-Surgical Nursing include the following:

- **Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Disorders**

A sample question includes the following:

A client presents with a subconjunctival hemorrhage. What can you tell the patient in terms of education of his condition?

1. The visual acuity is likely to be affected for several weeks.
2. It is a hemorrhage of the iris of the eye.
3. It affects the white part of the eye.
4. It requires microsurgery to correct.

Answer: 3. The question requires you to know that a subconjunctival hemorrhage is a hemorrhage affecting the white part of the eye and does not affect visual acuity. It does not affect the iris and it requires no specific treatment.

- **Cardiovascular Disorders**

A sample question might include the following:

A client presents with what is described as skipped beats felt in the area of the heart and when checking the pulse. What is the most likely cause of these “skipped beats”?

1. Supraventricular tachycardia
2. Premature atrial contractions
3. Bursts of ventricular tachycardia
4. Asystolic periods

Answer: 2. This question requires that you know that the most frequent cause of having a sensation of skipped beats is the presence of premature atrial contractions.

Supraventricular tachycardia usually presents with palpitations and rapid heartbeat; ventricular tachycardia is less common as are asystolic periods.

- **Respiratory Disorders**

An example of this type of question is the following:

A client is suffering from a lower respiratory tract infection. Where is this infection likely located?

1. Larynx
2. Trachea
3. Tonsils
4. Lungs

Answer: 4. The lungs are part of the lower respiratory tract, while the larynx, trachea and tonsils are considered part of the upper respiratory tract.

- **Endocrine Disorders**

An example of this type of question includes the following:

1. The patient is having a dysfunction of the adrenal cortex. Which hormones are likely to be affected? List all that apply.
  1. Epinephrine
  2. Aldosterone
  3. Cortisol
  4. Androgenic hormones
  5. Norepinephrine
  6. PTH

Answers: 2. 3. 4. The question's answer depends on knowing that the adrenal cortex secretes aldosterone, cortisol and androgenic hormones. Epinephrine and norepinephrine are secreted by the adrenal medulla and PTH is secreted by the parathyroid glands.

- **Integumentary Disorders**

An example of a question of this type includes the following:

A Caucasian client has the most common type of skin cancer and is in the clinic for resection. What type of skin cancer does this client have?

1. Actinic keratosis
2. Squamous cell carcinoma
3. Basal cell carcinoma
4. Melanoma

Answer: 3. The nurse should know that the most common type of skin cancer is basal cell carcinoma. Actinic keratosis is a common pre-cancerous condition, and squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma are less common types of skin cancer.

- **Gastrointestinal Disorders**

An example of a question in this category includes the following:

A patient has just had an upper GI endoscopy. What measure should the nurse take when caring for this patient?

1. Keep the patient in a right side-lying position

2. Keep the patient NPO until their gag reflex returns.
3. Instruct the patient in bulk-forming laxatives.
4. Give the patient the 'fatty meal' test.

Answer: 2. The patient should not eat or drink until their gag reflex returns. They do not need to lie on their right side and do not need bulk-forming laxatives. The 'fatty meal test' is not a part of an upper GI endoscopy.

- **Neurological Disorders**

An example of a question in this category includes the following:

A nurse is monitoring the status of a patient who has a central nervous system degeneration involving neurons that release dopamine. What signs should she look for?

1. Muscle rigidity and tremors
2. Mania and insomnia
3. Dilated pupils
4. Hypotension and bradycardia

Answer: 1. The patient with degeneration of CNS nerves releasing dopamine is at risk for Parkinson's disease. You would look for muscle rigidity and tremors, which are classic findings in Parkinson's disease.

- **Hematological Disorders**

An example of a question involved in this category includes the following:

A patient has severe thrombocytopenia. The nurse's care plan should include which of the following?

1. A private room with reverse isolation precautions.
2. Careful examination of lumbar puncture fluid.
3. Avoid intramuscular injections
4. Monitoring the urine output after giving IV Lasix.

Answer: 3. Because of a risk of bleeding, intramuscular injections should be avoided. A lumbar puncture should be avoided because of the risk of bleeding from the procedure. Urine output and isolation precautions are not important.

- **Musculoskeletal Disorders**

An example of a question in this category includes the following:

The nurse would expect to find evidence of osteoarthritis in any patient over the age of \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer: 65. Almost all individuals over the age of 65 have some degree of osteoarthritis.

- **Oncology Disorders**

An example of a test question in this category includes the following:

A client asks a nurse if he will die of his cancer. What is the most appropriate response?

1. About five million Americans survive their cancer for five years or more.
2. It is not a good idea to talk about death or dying with cancer patients.
3. All individuals with cancer will die of their disease.
4. Cancer is the leading cause of death among adults.

Answer: 1. About five million Americans will survive their cancer for five years or more. Heart disease is the most common cause of death among adults and not all individuals with cancer will die from their disease.

- **Genitourinary Disorders**

An example of a test question in this category includes the following:

Which of the following components of the genitourinary system are paired organs or structures?

1. Adrenal gland
2. Kidney
3. Urethra
4. Ureter
5. Bladder
6. Uterus

Answers: 2. 4. The kidneys and ureters are paired structures. The adrenal glands are paired but are not considered part of the genitourinary system. The urethra, bladder and uterus are single organs or structures.

- **Fluid, Electrolyte and Acid-Base Disorders**

An example of a test question in this category includes the following:

A nurse recognizes the following normal values for blood gases. Check all that apply.

1. A pH of 7.3
2. A PaCO<sub>2</sub> of 36 mm Hg
3. A HCO<sub>3</sub>-of 20 mEq/L
4. A PaO<sub>2</sub>of 84 mm Hg
5. A PaCO<sub>2</sub> of 30 mm Hg
6. A pH of 7.41

Answers: 2. 6. A normal pH is 7.35-7.45. A normal PaCO<sub>2</sub> is 35-45 mmHg. A normal HCO<sub>3</sub>- is 22-26 mEq/L. A Normal PaO<sub>2</sub> is 80-100 mm Hg. A normal O<sub>2</sub> Saturation is 95-99 percent saturation.

- **Perioperative Nursing**

An example of a test question in this category includes the following:

The nurse recognizes certain drugs place the surgical client to be at risk for perioperative complications. Check all that apply.

1. Acetaminophen
2. Aspirin
3. Omeprazole
4. Diphenhydramine
5. Ibuprofen
6. Sertraline (Zoloft)

Answers: 2. 4. 5. 6. Aspirin and ibuprofen can affect the risk of bleeding and stress ulcers during and after surgery. Diphenhydramine is an anti-cholinergic that contains

bromide which can bring on signs of dementia. Antidepressants can lower blood pressure with certain anesthetics.

- **Emergency Nursing**

A sample question includes the following:

A client with a T4 spinal cord injury of longstanding duration presents to the emergency room with signs of high blood pressure, flushed face, anxiety and nausea. What should the nurse look for first as a cause of this condition?

1. Pressure sores
2. Distended bladder
3. Menstrual cramps
4. Ingrown toenail

Answer: 1. The person is suffering from autonomic dysreflexia as a result of the high level thoracic injury. The most common cause of autonomic dysreflexia is a distended bladder. Any of the other choices can lead to AD; however, bladder distention is the most common.

- **Antepartum, Intrapartum, and Postpartum Nursing**

This can also be called **Maternity and Women's Health Nursing**. It includes such topics as prenatal care, intrapartum care, postpartum care, the care of newborns and the study of infertility disorders.

An example of test questions in this category includes the following:

1. The nurse does a vaginal and rectal swab for group B streptococcus at \_\_\_\_\_ weeks gestation. (List range of weeks)

Answer: 35-37. The vaginal and rectal swab is performed at 35-37 weeks' gestation.

2. What life-threatening emergency is the nurse looking for if the membranes are ruptured when the head is not engaged?
  1. Abruptio placentae
  2. Placenta previa
  3. Cord prolapse
  4. Uterine hyperstimulation

Answer: 3. Cord prolapse can be life-threatening if the membranes are ruptured before the head is engaged in the birth canal.

Many study books have a separate section for **Pharmacology**. Drug treatments are some of the most difficult things to learn, especially when it comes to memorizing the various drugs, their classes, side effects and dosing. You can study the various pharmacology items in a separate section so that you can use special techniques (as described in chapter 6) to study these medications.

Typical questions in the area of pharmacology include the following:

1. The nurse will perform the following action when giving a drug by means of a nasogastric tube.
  1. The drug will be crushed before administration.
  2. Flush the NG tube with 10 cc sterile water after administering the drug.
  3. Administer a single drug with 30 cc of water.
  4. Keep the client in an upright position for 15 minutes after giving the drug.

Answer: 3. Each drug should be administered with up to 30 cc of water after giving the drug and flushing with 30 cc of water between each drug. The patient should be kept upright for 30 minutes after the drug has been given.

2. What procedure is given a priority when giving a parenteral drug to a 2 year old child?
  1. Apply EMLA to the injection site one hour before giving the injection.
  2. Lightly tap the injection site just before giving the IM drug.
  3. Administer up to 1 cc of liquid into the injection site.
  4. Select the vastus lateralis for the administration of the drug.

Answer: 4. All answers are correct; however, it is the proper selection of the site as the vastus lateralis in a child under the age of three that is given the priority.

A section of many NCLEX-RN study guides exists for **Pediatrics**. Study this section and take a practice test solely meant for the study of pediatrics. The same is true of **Psychiatric Nursing**, which often exists as a separate section in an NCLEX-RN study guide.

Other sections you might study include **Gerontology Nursing, Community Health Nursing,** and **Legal and Ethical Issues in Nursing.**

## **Chapter 5: Studying for the Test: Making Good Use of Time and Resources**

As mentioned, it is a good idea to take the test within 6 months of graduation from nursing school. In order to study for the test, you should start by taking an accurate practice test that contains roughly the amount of questions you would need to take during the examination (75-265 questions). All areas of the ‘real’ test should be included. When you have scored the test, you should have a better idea of the areas you are most deficient in and those you know well. Prioritize your studies so that you spend the most time in areas you are most deficient in.

In chapter 8, we will discuss free resources available to you on the internet. There are also scores of NCLEX-RN study guides and it pays to purchase a few of these so you can have a balance of information to study from and a good amount of practice tests to take. Study the various types of questions asked and get a handle on the way the questions are laid out so you can quickly identify what each question is asking of you when you take the real test.

Think about forming a study group with a few others who are taking the test. That way you can have set times in which you are solely focusing on studying for the test. There will also be many times in your day that could be considered “down times” such as when you are waiting for your meal to cook, waiting for the bus, or other times where you can take practice questions. You need a balance of textual information and practice questions so you can begin to think along the lines of the test itself while gaining valuable information in the texts.

One technique that works well is to take notes on the information you know you will need to look over in the future as you study the guidebooks. When you have committed a piece of handwritten notes to memory and feel as though you do not need to go over that part again, highlight the information. When you have highlighted all your notes, you can then simply take practice tests, reviewing the written material you have copied out of the texts only right before the test.

Finish out your studies by taking another complete practice test. Hopefully, you will have scored better on this test than you did on the first test you took; this can increase your personal sense of satisfaction that you have studied enough to pass the test. Remember that the computer is looking for fifty percent of the questions answered correctly. If you can consistently do that on practice examinations, you have a good likelihood of being able to pass the NCLEX-RN exam.

## **Chapter 6: Pharmacology Review Tips**

Pharmacology is perhaps the most daunting of the subjects on the examination as you will be responsible for knowing something about hundreds of different oral and parenteral medications. Rather than just studying and taking notes, this part of the study process can be made more effective through the use of a flashcard-style game that you can play anytime you have a few minutes of time.

Purchase 5 x 7 index cards and cut them in half so you have double the amount of cards that are roughly square in appearance. When you come across a medication in your studies, write down the brand name or names and the generic name of the medication on one side of the card. On the opposite side, put the class of drug, its actions and any pertinent side effects. The real NCLEX-RN examination will not ask you about all the possible side effects of a medication but there will be a few key ones that should be mentioned. When you have written down all the cards, start with a stack of cards you will be committing to memory.

Read the brand name and generic name on one side of the card and identify the drug class, those actions, and side effects that you expect to find on the back of the card. If you are correct and identify the pertinent information on the back of the card just from looking at the name of the drug, you can put it in the “yes” pile because you have identified what you need to know successfully. If you don’t get the answer right, put the card in the “no” pile. When you have gone through the stack of cards, set the “yes” pile to the side and pick up all of those you did not answer correctly.

Go through the “no” pile, creating a “yes” pile and a “no” pile again. You should have at least some of the drugs you did not know before now memorized so they can go into the “yes” pile. When you have finished that stack of facts you did not know before and have a new “yes” and “no” pile, set aside the “yes” pile with the original “yes” pile and repeat the “no” pile again. Repeat this as many times as necessary so that you have all of the cards in the “yes” pile and have no medications in the “no” pile.

You can play the entire stack of cards in one sitting or grab a bunch of cards at random times of the day and play the “yes-no” game with however many cards you have time to go through. In this way, you will have spent more time on those medications that are the hardest for you to remember. Save the cards for a run through in the day or two before the test. At that time, most of the medications will have been successfully memorized and your “no” pile will be very small in comparison to your “yes” pile. If this is the case for you, you can be rest assured you know your medications and will likely do well on those questions directly related to medications and pharmacology.

Flash cards such as those done for pharmacology can be adapted to other aspects of the test. For example, you can put “Hyperthyroidism” on one side of the card and a list of symptoms on the other side. You can have a flashcard for diseases and play the “yes-no” game with those types of questions and materials as well. It is a good way of making studying fun and you can actually chart your progress by keeping track of the height of the “yes” and “no” piles each time you play the game.

## Chapter 7: FAQs About the NCLEX-RN Test

There are many things you need to know about the NCLEX-RN examination. Here are some frequently asked questions, along with the answers:

- **How do I know if I am eligible for the NCLEX examination?** The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) does not keep a list of eligibility requirements. You need to contact the State Board of Nursing in your state for the eligibility requirements of your particular state.
- **What is the process of applying to take the NCLEX examination?** There are actually two steps to this process. The first is to contact the State Board of Nursing or regulatory body in your state in order to make an application to take the NCLEX examination. Then you contact Pearson VUE by phone or internet to pay the examination fee and register for the examination. Online, you can go to <http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex> or call this number: 866.496.2539 to sign up for the examination.
- **If I am an internationally-educated nurse. What are my requirements?** Each state has its own requirements for internationally-educated nurses. Contact the State Board of Nursing or similar regulatory body for information on the requirements for taking the test.
- **Can I have my NCLEX fees paid for by my work or school?** Yes, anyone can pay for your NCLEX-RN fees by calling 1-866-496-2539 and paying by credit or debit card.
- **When I apply for the examination, how soon can I get a test date?** You can get a test date within 30 days of application. If you are retaking the test, it can take up to 45 days to get a scheduled date. You can reserve the right to select a different date as long as it is further out from the 30 or 45 day scheduled date.
- **Once I have registered for the NCLEX examination, when can I get my Authorization to Test email?** Once the State Board of Nursing or other regulatory body has deemed you eligible to test for the examination, you will receive an email giving you the authorization to test (ATT). You must pay the fees to the State Board of Nursing and pay the fees through Pearson VUE in order to be authorized to test. Once you get your ATT, you have no longer than 90 days to take the test. If you go past the 90 days, you must start the eligibility process all over again, including making additional payments in order to test.

- **Where is the test taken?** The test is taken at any authorized Pearson VUE Testing Center. In order to find the testing center nearest you, go to the Pearson VUE website to locate a nearby Pearson VUE Testing Center.
- **I need an accommodation in order to take the test. How do I get this authorized?** An authorization to have an accommodation to take the test must be arranged through your State Board of Nursing or other regulatory body. You will need a physician's statement including the diagnosis and rationale for special accommodations, which can include being able to take the test over a longer time limit or having an assistant help you read the test questions.
- **What type of ID card do I need for the test?** You must have a passport, driver's license, state or provincial ID card, permanent residence card or military ID card. For international testing centers, you need your passport and cards.
- **Does my middle name need to be matching on my ID and Authorization to Test (ATT)?** No. Only the first and last name need to match exactly.
- **When can I know if I have passed or failed?** You can get an answer within 48 hours by paying a small fee and logging on to <https://www.ncsbn.org/1225.htm>. The official test results will come by mail through your State Board of Nursing or other regulatory body. It takes from 2-6 weeks to get the official results by mail.
- **If I fail the NCLEX test, when am I allowed to retest?** It has been determined that you need to wait another 45 days in order to study some more and take the test again. Contact the State Board of Nursing and Pearson VUE in order to get another ATT. There will be fees for retaking the test.
- **How many retakes can I get?** There are no limits as to how many times you can take the test, according to the NCSBN; however, each State Board of Nursing may have a limit as to how often you can take the test. Contact your State Board of Nursing for these requirements.
- **Is there an opportunity to challenge a question I believe is incorrect?** Yes, but only in the US. There is a Review and Challenge process in which you collaborate with your State Board of Nursing to challenge the question through the NCSBN.
- **Are there any official study guides?** No. There are not study guides endorsed by the NCSBN. Talk to a nursing educational professional to see what books and study guides they recommend.

- **Is their licensure reciprocity between the US and Canada?** Even though the same test is given to Canadian and US nurses, the possibility of reciprocity must be explored through your State Board of Nursing or other similar regulatory body.
- **What is the average number of questions answered in the NCLEX examination?** The average number of questions asked is 117 for the NCLEX-PN exam and 119 for the NCLEX-RN exam.
- **How long does the average test take?** The average length of time a candidate takes to finish the examination is between 2.3 and 2.5 hours.
- **What are my chances of running out of time?** About 2 percent of all candidates will run out of time before finishing the test.
- **How many candidates need to take the entire 265 questions on the NCLEX-RN examination?** About twenty percent of all candidates end up taking all of the questions on the examination.
- **Is there a penalty for guessing on a question?** Because you cannot skip a question, you must guess at a question after careful review of the answers possible. Remember that each question has a 50-50 chance that you will answer it correctly so there is no penalty for guessing.
- **Is there a specific time frame for answering the question?** No. You can take your time to study the question so you can answer it with a maximum of confidence. Remember that only about 2 percent of candidates actually run out of time.

## Chapter 8: Free Resources You Can Use

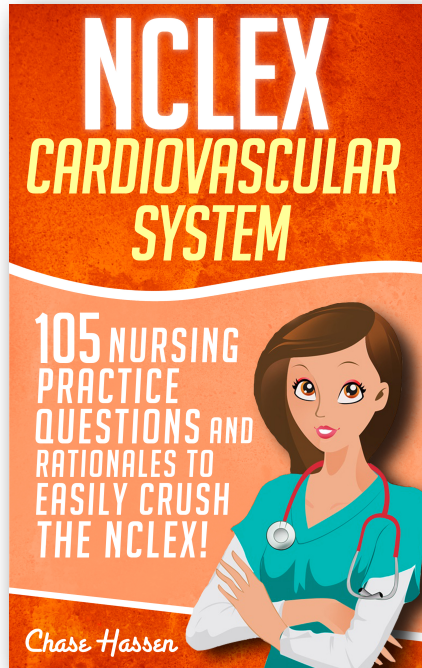
There are opportunities to study for the test online that are free and will help you get an idea of what taking the test is like. Here are some options:

- **Caring4You.** <http://caring4you.net/tests.html>. This is a site loaded with tips and practice questions along with podcasts that help you study for the test. This site offers just about anything you need to know in order to pass the test. There are some seminar reviews on the site that you have to pay for but the vast majority of advice and sample questions are free of charge.
- **Nursing Students Buy, Sell, and Trade.** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NursingStudentsBuySellAndTrade>. On this Facebook group, you will find over 3000 Nursing Students who are actively buying, selling, and trading a wide variety of textbooks, flashcards, nursing equipment and other resources. This is the place where you will find the discounts you can't find anywhere else. Highly Recommended!
- **Mighty Nurse.** <http://www.mightynurse.com/nclex-practice-questions/>. This site offers you a total of 120 practice questions along with their rationales. They are good things to take when you are trying to see what level you are at in the various areas of the NCLEX examination.
- **RN to BSN Site.** <http://www.rntobsn.org/resources/nclex-exam-guide/>. This site can give you the pass rate of various types of candidates who are taking the test and will help guide you in the registration process for taking the test.
- **Nurse Labs.** <http://nurseslabs.com/nclex-practice-questions/>. This site offers several different practice examinations in clusters of about 20-40 questions per test. The test questions come from broad areas of nursing so as to best mimic what is done on the test.

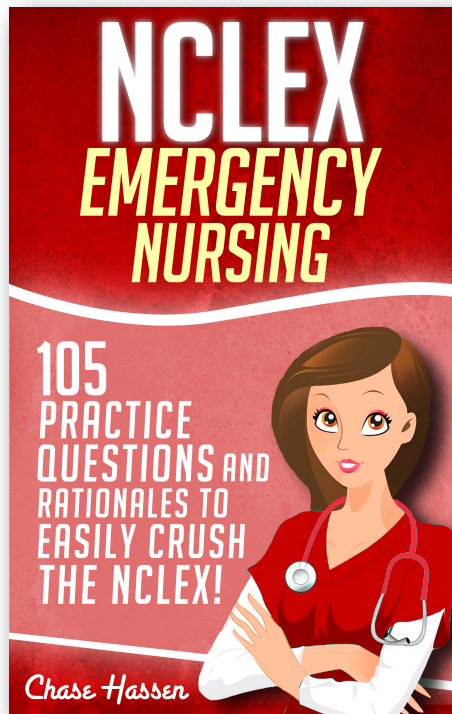
Hopefully this guide and the resources offered will help you study for the test and pass it successfully. Those who take the time to understand the ins and outs of the test and who practice taking sample questions generally do better on the examination. The amount of time you spend on actual studying and taking practice tests is up to you. Try to balance studying texts on nursing, reading guidebooks on the NCLEX examination, and taking practice questions. Best of luck to you!

## Chapter 9: Highly Recommended Books for Success

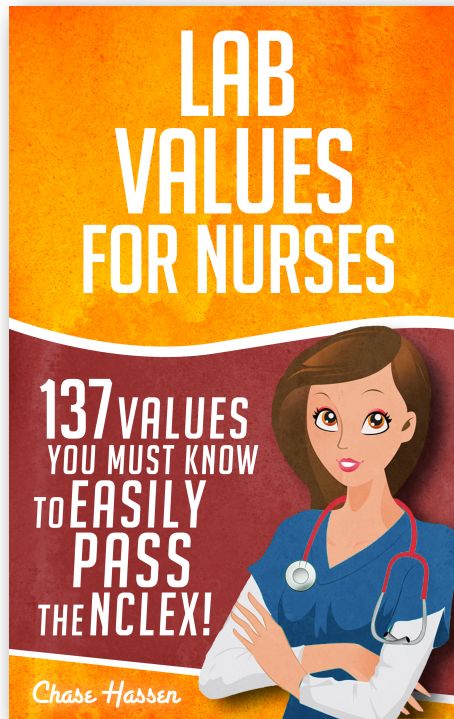
[NCLEX: Cardiovascular System : 105 Nursing Practice and Rationales to Easily Crush the NCLEX!](#)



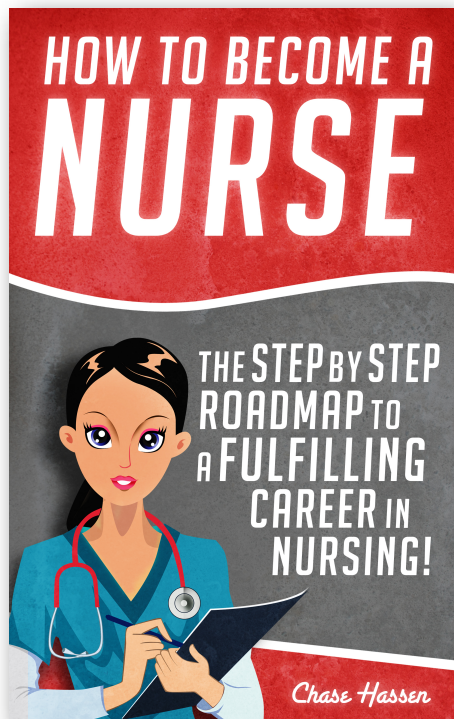
[NCLEX: Emergency Nursing : 105 Practice Questions and Rationales to Easily Crush the NCLEX!](#)



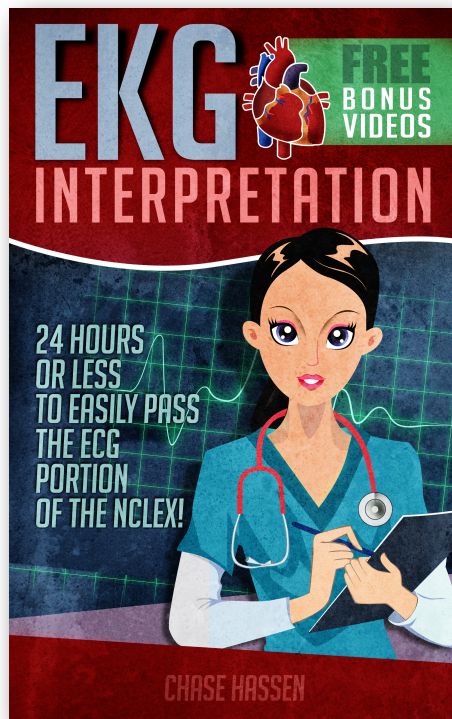
[Lab Values: 137 Values You Know to Easily Pass The NCLEX!](#)



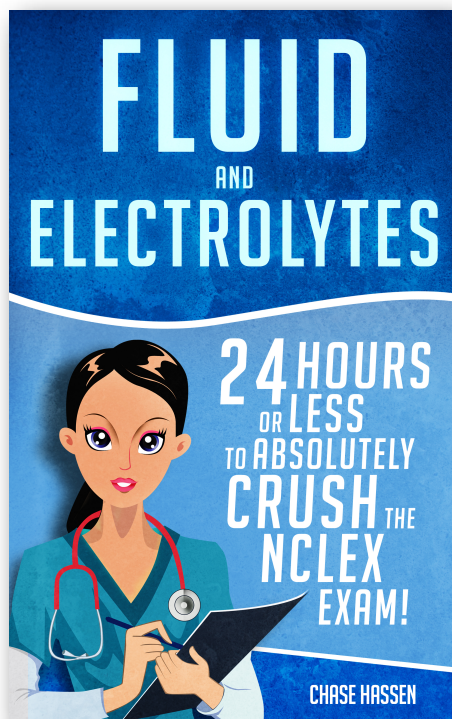
[How to Become a Nurse: The Step by Step Roadmap to a Fulfilling Career in Nursing!](#)



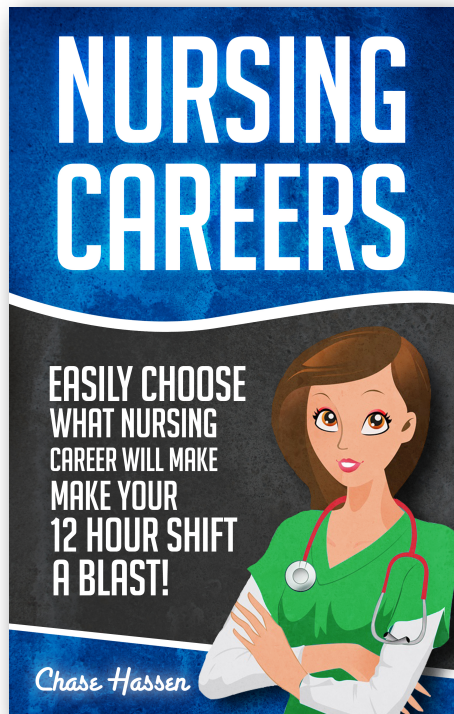
[EKG Interpretation: 24 Hours or Less to Easily Pass the ECG Portion of the NCLEX!](#)



[Fluid and Electrolytes: 24 Hours or Less to Absolutely Crush the NCLEX Exam!](#)



[Nursing Careers: Easily Choose What Nursing Career Will Make Your 12 Hour Shift a Blast!](#)



[Night Shift: 10 Survival Tips for Nurses to Get Through The Night!](#)

