

Family Nurse Practitioner Certification

Intensive Review

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Preface

The purpose of this family nurse practitioner (FNP) review book is simple. It is designed to save you valuable time reviewing for the FNP certification exam. The content is applicable for both exams from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP).

A special effort has been made to cut down as much extraneous information as possible without sacrificing the quality of the book's contents. The end result is a review guide that will not only help to cut down your total review time, but will also give you a more productive and less frustrating experience.

The guiding principle that I kept in mind when writing this review guide is that most of you have a limited amount of time to study. Your review time is valuable. Ultimately, I designed this book to assist you to thoroughly study for the family nurse practitioner certification exam in an efficient manner. The end result of this idea is the format that I used when writing this book. I call it the "Fast Facts" method. Information is delivered in a brief, yet concise manner. It is easier to comprehend. It is also more realistic.

The entire lifespan, ranging from pediatrics, adolescence, adulthood (including pregnancy), into geriatrics, is reviewed. In addition, nonclinical content, such as ethics, medico-legal issues, advanced practice law, reimbursement and others, is included. For the adult nurse practitioner (ANP) who wants to use this book to study, simply skip the pediatric and obstetrics sections. Your review should start with the adolescence section and continue until the geriatrics section, including the nonclinical content.

I have combined five resources into one "Mega Review" study guide. It contains (1) specific certification exam information which includes instructions on speeding up the application process, (2) test-taking techniques that are highly relevant for both the ANCC and AANP exam, (3) a question dissection and analysis section where you learn to pick out the "Best Clues" to solve problems, along with the necessary clinical knowledge, (4) a review of primary care disorders including

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specific “Exam Tips” with advice on some current exam topics, and finally, (5) a total of 500 sample questions and answers to practice your new skills.

Included in this review guide are many pictures and tables. Physical exam maneuvers (i.e., the Drawer sign, McMurrays sign, etc.) are beautifully illustrated by photographs and notes. In addition, unlike the other nurse practitioner review books out in the market today, this book approaches the organ systems review in an unusual manner.

This review guide does not follow the usual head-to-toe order in the systems review section. The first section is on dermatology. I have chosen to do this because of feedback from new nurse practitioner graduates, many of whom report that they felt deficient in their knowledge of skin disorders.

I have been teaching and designing review courses for 10 years. I am also in active clinical practice. If you would like an ANP, FNP, pediatric (PNP) review course at your school or have comments and suggestions about this book, please contact me by email from my company’s web site at www.NPreview.com.

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Certification Exam Information

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CREDENTIALING ORGANIZATIONS

American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)

www.nursingworld.org/ancc

Phone: 800-284-2378

The ANCC is the credentialing body of the American Nurses Association (ANA). The credentialing exams currently being offered to nurse practitioners are for the following specialties: adult, family, pediatric, gerontologic, acute care, adult or family psychiatric and mental health, and advanced diabetes management.

American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)

www.aanp.org

Phone: 512-442-5202

Fax: 512-442-5221

Email: certification@aanp.org

The AANP is a specialty organization that serves only nurse practitioners. It is currently offering three specialty exams: adult, family, and geriatric nurse practitioner.

Thomson Prometric Computer Testing Centers

www.2Test.com

Both the ANCC and the AANP use this company to administer their computer-based certification exams. Their testing centers are located in most major cities in the United States and in some international sites. All of the testing centers are open Monday to Friday. Some are also open on weekends.

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For the ANCC, the AANP acceptance letter includes a toll-free number to schedule for their exam. You can register, schedule, reschedule, confirm or cancel your appointment online at the Thomson Prometric Web site. In order to register for the exam, you must have a candidate eligibility number. The number is mailed to you directly from Thomson Prometric within 2 weeks after you have received your authorization-to-test letter from the credentialing agency.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

American Nurses Credentialing Center

Generally, the ANCC updates their nurse practitioner exams every 2 to 3 years.

The questions in the exam are all referenced from major textbooks, national expert panel guidelines, papers, and official governmental reports and statistics. Do not assume that because these are exams for nurse practitioners, the references used are written mostly by nurse practitioner authors. The opposite is true. Currently, a large number of the clinical references are obtained from medical textbooks.

American Academy of Nurse Practitioners

The reference sources for AANP exams are not publicly known. The content of their exams is based on the results of a role delineation study that was conducted by both the AANP and the Professional Examination Service.

Exam Format

Nurse practitioner certification exams from both the ANCC and the AANP are now all computer-based tests (CBT). The computer will give you the entire 3.5 hours to take the test. It will not shut down automatically like the RN NCLEX exams do after enough points have been earned to pass the exam.

Total Number of Questions

The ANCC exam comprises 175 total questions. Of these, 25 sample questions are not graded because they are being evaluated statistically. Therefore, the actual number of scored questions is 150. Unfortunately, there is no way to tell the questions apart so it is best to assume that all are scored.

The AANP exam comprises 150 total questions. Some of the questions are also sample questions and are not worth any points. As in the ANCC, it is best to assume that all the questions are being graded in the exam because there is no way to tell them apart from each other.

Total Time

The actual testing time that is counted is 3.5 hours. An additional 30 minutes of “free” time is allotted for the computer tutorial; this time period does not count.

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When the 30-minute tutorial period expires, the test automatically starts on the computer screen. There are no breaks. Most students generally finish the exam within 2.5 hours.

Certification Exam Questions

Because the AANP certification exam has fewer questions, more time is available to solve the test questions compared with those on the ANCC exam.

In general, each question is allotted about 1 minute. Sometimes, the first few questions seem more difficult. This is a common test design.

Each question is worth one point no matter how long it takes to solve or how difficult it may be.

Fast Facts The ANCC and AANP Exams**Which board certification is better?**

Both certifications are equally recognized as national specialty organizations, and credentials awarded by them are acceptable to governmental entities such as Medicare, local state agencies such as the state boards of nursing (BON), and private corporations. For new graduates, it is a good idea to speak to nurse practitioners and faculty in your area of practice to find out whether one certification is preferred over the other.

What is an official transcript?

A transcript is considered “official” only if it remains inside the sealed envelope in which it was mailed from the college registrar’s office. Ask to have the transcripts mailed directly to your residence and not to the certifying organization. If you are planning to take both the ANCC and AANP exams at the same time, then you will need at least three copies of your final transcripts. Open one copy (yours) and check it for accuracy and keep the other two unopened to mail with your applications.

What is the ANCC’s “Form E” and how is it used?

The AANP does not use this form. It is only used by the ANCC. Another name for it is the “Nurse Practitioner Educational Preparation” form. It is part of the application packet that can be downloaded from the ANCC Web site at www.nursingworld.org/ancc.

The Form E must be signed by the current director of the program you attended even if you are not a recent graduate.

What is the difference between the testing dates for the AANP and the ANCC?

The ANCC exams can be taken almost anytime of the year (except major holidays), whenever the Thomson Prometric Testing Centers are open. The ANCC has no application deadlines, and their applications can be sent in at anytime of the year.

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The AANP exams can only be taken three times a year during a specified time period known as the testing “window.” Each window lasts 10 weeks and has an application deadline. Therefore, there are three deadlines per year to watch for when applying for the AANP exam. There are also “late deadlines” for which you are charged an extra fee of \$50.00 in addition to the normal testing fees.

The testing windows are generally around the dates listed here. Window #1 is from January to April (deadline is December; late deadline is in January). Window #2 is May to August (deadline is April; late deadline is in May). Window #3 is September to December (deadline is July; late deadline is usually in August). These dates may change. Check the AANP Web site at www.aanp.org for the most current dates.

When can I apply for the certification exams?

According to the ANCC staff to whom I have spoken (by phone), their organization prefers that the test takers apply only when the final transcripts are available. They want the entire application with the official final transcript and the check together in one large envelope. Sending them separately can delay the processing of an application.

For both, you may apply as early as the last semester before you graduate. If you apply before you graduate, include an official copy of your current transcript (even if it is not the final one). When the final transcript is released, mail an official copy as soon as possible to complete your application. Do not forget to photocopy the application forms and the check before mailing them. Your authorization-to-test letter usually arrives within 4 to 6 weeks afterward if there are no problems with your application.

For those who want to take the AANP exam, it is a good idea to apply early, during the last semester before you graduate, because of the testing window deadlines.

For example, if you plan to graduate during the fall semester, you will be graduating in the month of December. Unfortunately, the deadline for the first testing window of the year (January to April) is also in December. Therefore, if you miss the deadline, you will have to wait 5 months (after you graduate) to take the AANP test because the second testing window of the year doesn't start until June.

It is easy to miss this deadline (and the late deadline) if you decide to wait for your final transcripts before applying.

Your early application will be acceptable as long as you include an official copy of your most current transcript and have paid the testing fee. When the final transcripts are released, send an official copy as soon as possible to complete your application. Call the AANP to follow up and check that they did receive the final transcript.

Are there special instructions for AANP applicants?

Be warned that the AANP applications must be filled out very carefully. Do not leave any of their questions unanswered or leave any blanks on their forms. Avoid

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answering the questions with notes such as “refer to enclosed transcript” or “not applicable.”

Doing any of these things will cause your application to be rejected. It will delay the processing. Keep in mind that you must provide the course numbers, credit hours, and dates on the application forms.

After receiving an acceptance letter, how much time do I have before it expires?

For the ANCC, you have up to 90 days from the date stamped in the acceptance letter to take your exam.

In contrast, the AANP’s acceptance letter is valid only for the testing window for which you applied. If you miss taking your exam within the dates assigned for that window, then your acceptance letter will no longer be valid. A memo must be faxed to the AANP certification department with a request to sit for another testing window. For more information and instructions, call their office at 512-442-4262.

When can I schedule for the exam?

You may schedule yourself for the exam only after you have been assigned a Thomson Prometric eligibility ID number. To schedule an appointment, go to the Thomson Prometric Web site at www.2Test.com.

If you cancel an appointment online, you must give them at least 48 hours notice. If you have less than 48 hours, call the local testing center to cancel your appointment. When you reschedule, a rescheduling fee will be charged.

What should I do if the morning time slot I want is no longer available?

Morning time slots tend to be filled quickly. If you are unable to find a morning slot, some testing centers have a waiting list. This option is not available online; you must call the local center to find out if a waiting list is available. Another idea is to look for an alternate testing center that still has the times or dates that you want.

Apply as early as you can after receiving the acceptance letter. You can always change the date and/or time later. Some testing centers are very busy and get booked very fast. I had a student from one of my review courses who had to take her exam on the last day before her letter expired because the testing center she wanted was so full.

In addition, avoid scheduling yourself at the time of the day when you tend to feel the most tired or sleepy. For most, this is usually after lunchtime. Simply picking the “wrong” time of the day to take your exam may cause you to make careless errors. It can take as few as one to two points to fail the exam.

When do I receive my test scores?

Scores from the ANCC exam are usually mailed within 7 days of completing the exam.

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Test takers of the AANP exam find out immediately whether they have passed or failed. The unofficial score is shown on the computer screen only after you have finished and shut down the exam. You will not get a paper printout of your scores from the testing center. The official letter with your scores are mailed within 1 to 2 weeks after the exam.

What are the passing rates for each exam?

Historically, the passing rates for the certification exams have ranged between the 70th and the 80th percentile.

What are the passing scores?

The ANCC passing score is 350 points or higher with a range of 100 to 500 points.

The AANP passing score is 500 points or higher with a range of 100 to 800 points.

How are the official scores listed?

The scores for each domain (ANCC term) or category (AANP term) are listed individually in addition to the total scores. The lower scores indicate your weakest areas; devote more study time to these areas if you do not pass on your first attempt. If you have not yet taken a review course, I recommend that you find one or buy their tapes. My review courses are listed at my Web site *www.npreview.com*.

How does the board of nursing (BON) from my state receive my scores?

There are two ways for the BON to get your scores. One way is for the ANCC or the AANP to mail your scores directly to them. You must sign the special form in the application packet giving them permission to mail out your scores. Another method is for you to mail a copy of the official letter with your scores to your state's BON.

What happens if I fail to pass my certification exam?

A permission-to-retest application form is mailed to you along with a retest fee charge.

The ANCC exam may be retaken as early as 90 days after the date of the last exam you took as long as you have reapplied and paid the retest fee.

Test takers of the AANP exam are required to take 15 contact hours of continuing education credits that address their "area of weakness." For example, someone whose scores are low under the "diagnosis" category must choose courses that address this area or the continuing education credits may be rejected.

Mail or fax your certificates of completion as proof. After your continuing education credits have been approved, an application-to-retest form will be mailed to you.

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What if I fail the AANP or ANCC exam the second time?

You must resubmit a full application (like the first time) along with all the required documentation and pay the full test fee.

What is the professional designation used by each organization?

The ANCC now uses the initials “FNP-BC” (Family Nurse Practitioner-Board Certified). No periods or spaces are necessary when writing these initials.

The AANP uses the designation of “NP-C” (Nurse Practitioner-Certified). Do not use a comma before the “C” (certified). Use only a hyphen.

How long is my certification valid?

Board certification from both the ANCC and AANP is valid for 5 years.

What do I need to do to for recertification?

According to the ANCC, recertification for adult nurse practitioners (ANPs) and family nurse practitioners (FNPs) requires 1,000 hours of clinical practice (over a 5-year period). In addition professional development credits are required. These categories are continuing education credits, graduate courses, lectures, presentations, publications, research, and preceptorships.

The AANP requires a mandatory minimum of 1,000 hours of clinical practice as a nurse practitioner (in your area of specialty) along with 75 contact hours of continuing education credits in order to recertify.

Another method of recertification for both ANCC and AANP is to retake (and pass) the board certification exam.

Is there any reciprocity between the ANCC and AANP?

Yes, both the AANP and ANCC have a reciprocity program. Family, adult, and geriatric nurse practitioners who are certified by other approved national certification bodies that meet their criteria are eligible to apply. To request information and applications, contact the AANP by the following methods:

- 1) Email: certification@aanp.org
- 2) Fax: 512-442-5221
- 3) Phone: 512-442-5202

Contact the ANCC by calling their Customer Care Center at 1-800-284-2378.

Statistical Information

ANCC Scoring Classification

This is the breakdown of the domains used in the ANCC exam. These numbers have gradually changed over time, but what has remained consistent in their exam is that a large percentage of the questions are on the clinical management and the assessment/diagnosis of illness.

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Table 1.1 ANCC Domains of Practice

Domain of Practice	Percent
I. Clinical management	34
II. Professional role and policy	6
III. Nurse practitioner and patient relationship	11
IV. Assessment of acute and chronic illness	26
V. Research	2
VI. Health promotion and disease prevention	21
Total	100

*Adapted from the ANCC Adult Nurse Practitioner Board Certification Exam Content Outline; October 9, 2006. <http://www.nursingworld.org/ancc/cert/>

Summary

These are the top three domains in the ANCC certification exam:

- Clinical management (34%)
- Assessment of acute and chronic illness (26%)
- Health promotion and disease prevention (21%)

Test takers who score low in any two of the domains previously listed usually fail the exam because these account for the majority of questions (81% or 121) on the exam.

The percentage of nonclinical questions has recently been increased from 10% to 19%. The nonclinical domains (29 questions) are:

- Nurse practitioner and patient relationship (11%)
- Professional role and policy (6%)
- Research (2%)

AANP Scoring Classification

The AANP does not currently release any of their statistics. The percentage makeup of their exam questions for each of the categories listed in the following is not public knowledge:

- Health promotion
- Disease prevention
- Diagnosis
- Management of acute disease
- Management of chronic disease

Summary

A larger number of questions on this exam are clinically based. This conclusion is based on personal experience and on feedback from former review course students.

TIPS FOR THE ANCC AND AANP EXAMS

- The most current treatment guidelines and protocols that have been released within the past 1 to 2 years before you sit for the exam will not be included. It takes at least 2 years for these changes to appear as questions on the exams.
- The nurse practitioner certification tests are national exams concentrating mainly on primary care disorders. These are not tests on specialty disorders. Keep this in mind when you are reading the answer options. In general, avoid picking exotic diseases as answers.
- The AANP exams list the normal lab results of the pertinent lab in a test question. The ANCC does not do this. A list of suggested lab values to memorize is in chapter 2.
- No asymptomatic or borderline cases of disease states are presented in the test. For example, in real life, most patients with iron-deficiency anemia are asymptomatic and do not have either pica or spoon-shaped nails. In the exam, they will have both.
- Disease states are given in their classic textbook presentation. For example, if a case of acute mononucleosis is being presented, the patient will most likely be a teenager with the classic triad of sore throat, fatigue, and enlarged cervical nodes.
- Learn the disorders for which examination maneuvers are used. For example, Tinel's and/or Phalen's is used to assess for carpal tunnel syndrome.
- Learn what a positive result means for a physical exam maneuver. For example, a positive anterior or posterior drawer test means that a knee is unstable. A positive finding of either the Ortolani or Barlow maneuver signifies an abnormal hip due to congenital hip dysplasia or a hypoplastic hip.
- Be knowledgeable about normal results of a physical exam. There will be very few questions on benign variants. Some examples are torus palatinus and fish-tail uvula (listed under the HEENT system review).
- Learn what a lab result means and what it is used for. It is very rare to get a question asking for an actual numeric value. Instead a question may ask about the clinical significance of an abnormal test result.
- Medications are listed in both generic and brand name forms. Most of the drugs mentioned in the exam are the older, well-recognized drugs and may include Macrolide: erythromycin or clarithromycin (Biaxin); Cephalosporins: first generation (Keflex), second generation (Ceftin/Cefzil), third generation (Rocephin); Quinolones: Cipro, Floxin, and the newer quinolones: lev-aquinolone (Levaquin); Sulfa: Bactrim, Pediazole; Tetracyclines: tetracycline, doxycycline; Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs): ibuprofen, naproxen

Chapter 1

(Anaprox); and cough suppressants: dextromorphan (Robitussin). Other examples are in the chapter 3 systems review section.

- Some answer options for drugs list only the drug class instead of the generic and brand names.
- When memorizing drugs, learn the drug class, generic or brand name, the action, major drug interactions, major contraindications and other safety issues, and the common side effects. There is no need to memorize drug doses. For example, a common side effect of ACE inhibitors is a dry cough (up to 10%).
- The ANCC exam is more likely to have answer options written as declarative statements in questions in which a case scenario addressing mental health is used. You should keep these communication tips in mind: ask open-ended questions, avoid judgmental statements, do not reassure, do not give abrupt responses, respect the patient's culture, and do not confront a patient.
- One or two questions on bioterrorism topics have appeared in the AANP exam. Remember that the best method for spreading a virus or bacterium is to make it airborne or nebulize it. Also, ciprofloxacin (Cipro) is used to treat anthrax.
- Questions about nursing theory have not been seen on any exams from either the ANCC or AANP for several years.
- Other health theorists (not nurses) and theories that have been included on the exams in the past are (not inclusive): Erickson, Freud, Piaget, Elizabeth Kübler-Ross's theory on bereavement, health belief model, self-efficacy model, System's theory, etc.
- The ANCC has increased the number of questions on nonclinical issues (19%) in the past 2 years. These include health policy, nurse practice act, nurse practitioner role, living wills, durable power of attorney, advanced directives, privacy laws, documentation, quality assurance, risk management, etc.
- Keep in mind that the majority of questions in the AANP and 81% of the questions (2005 stats) on the ANCC exams are clinically based.
- Follow national treatment guidelines for certain disorders. The following is a list of treatment guidelines used as references by the ANCC (AANP does not publish a list):

Hypertension

Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure (JNC) 7th Report

Community-Acquired Pneumonia (CAP)

American Thoracic Society or the ATS Treatment Guidelines

Hyperlipidemia

National Cholesterol Education Panel (2002). Third Report of the Expert Panel on Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Cholesterol in Adults

Asthma

Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma. Expert Panel Report. National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (2003)

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Sexually Transmitted Diseases (or sexually transmitted infections)

Sexually Transmitted Disease Treatment Guidelines (2002). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Bacterial Endocarditis

Prevention of Bacterial Endocarditis (1997). American Heart Association

Health Prevention

The Guide to Clinical Preventative Services (2002). US Preventative Task Force

TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING YOUR SCORES

- You can save yourself more time by learning the computer commands before taking the exam. Go to the ANCC web site: www.nursingworld/ancc/. Click the *Computer Tutorial* link and practice.
- Before the test plan ahead of time at home what you want to write on the scratch paper.
- If you are taking the computer tutorial for the first time in the center, it usually takes about 10 to 15 minutes to learn the system.
- Use the remaining “free” time to write your notes on the scratch paper provided by the test proctor. Do not waste actual testing time to start writing your notes.
- There is no penalty for guessing. If you run out of time, quickly fill out the remaining questions at random.
- Never leave any question unanswered. It only takes one point to fail the test.
- Do not read questions too rapidly. You will go into “autopilot” mode. Frequently remind yourself to “read slowly and read carefully.”
- The first few questions are usually “harder” to solve. This is a common test design. Do not let it shake your confidence.
- Remember, no matter how hard a question is to solve, it is still worth only one point.
- If you are having problems understanding the answer options, read them again from the bottom up (from option D to A).
- Save yourself time (and mental strain) with the longer questions by *first* reading the last sentence (or stem). Then read the question again from the beginning. The advantage of this “backward reading” technique is that you know ahead of time what the question is asking. When you read it again “normally,” it becomes easier to recognize important clues that will help you answer the question faster.
- One method of guessing is to look for a pattern. Pick the one answer that does not fit the pattern.
- Another method is to pick the answer that most “attracts” you. Go with your gut feeling and do not change the answer unless you are sure it is the correct one.
- In general, it is not a good idea to change too many answers on any exam.

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- Wear an analog watch so that you can check to see if you are spending too much time answering questions.
- Each question is allotted approximately 60 seconds to solve. Most test takers finish the exam within 2.5 hours.
- If you need more than 1.5 minutes to answer a question, you are wasting time.
- On questions that you are spending too much time on, guess or pick an answer at random and “mark” it.
- “Marking” a question allows you to return to it later and change an answer.
- Return to all your “marked” questions only after you have answered all questions on the exam.
- If you have failed the test before, try not to memorize what you did on the previous one you took. The answers you remember may be wrong.
- Regarding the above advice, “pretend” that you have never seen the test before so that you can begin fresh mentally when you retake the test.
- Small pieces of hard candy are allowed inside the testing area – they have to be unwrapped before they can be taken in. Wear clothes with pockets to store the candy. If you are mentally exhausted, eat some of the unwrapped hard candy you brought with you.
- If you still feel fatigued and have enough time left, consider a quick bathroom break. Drink and splash cold water on your face. Jump in place or do jumping jacks to wake up.
- The clock in the computer keeps counting down and does not stop for breaks.

MORE EXAM TIPS: REVIEW TIMELINE

- The amount of time you need to study depends on how well you are prepared.
- Look over the table of contents of your primary care textbook and plan the time you want to allocate to each organ system.
- Start reviewing your weakest areas first and assign more time to them. Save the areas you know well for the last.
- Try to study daily even if you can only afford 10 to 15 minutes. You can break up your study sessions over the day. You will retain information better this way than by doing one large cram session per week.
- Take some notes or photocopy material that you want to learn and place it in your purse or wallet. If you are in a line or waiting, read and study them.
- Use all the senses you can when studying. Be familiar with how you learn best.
- Read not only visually, but also read out loud to yourself. You will be using both your visual and auditory senses and will retain information better.
- Pick an area to study where you will not be disturbed. For some with small children, this may mean studying outside the home in places such as libraries, bookstores, or even in a car!

- If you learn better in a group, organize one. Decide ahead of time what to cover so that you do not waste time.

TIPS ON OTHER TEST-TAKING ISSUES

Emotional Readiness

Studies show that high levels of “stress hormones” such as adrenaline interfere with memory and actually kill neurons. Your internal beliefs about the exam are very important and should not be minimized. Try the following exercises if you feel too anxious or fearful about passing the exam. This is especially true for test takers who have failed the exam before.

Make yourself a tape or write down positive affirmations on sticky notes. Post them on your bathroom mirror, the refrigerator, the car dashboard, and other places where you can see them often. Some examples:

- I know *deep inside me* that I will pass this test. I always do well on multiple-choice tests. I have passed many other tests before. I will also pass the certification exam.

Read it at least 10 times a day. Even if you don’t feel it, your subconscious will start believing it. The week before the test, do this exercise as often as you can.

Your Panic Button

If you find yourself starting to panic, try the following calming technique:

- Close your eyes. Tell yourself to “stop.” Keep repeating the word until you calm down. At this time, concentrate on your breathing as much as you can.
- Take three deep breaths through your nose and exhale slowly through pursed lips.
- Tell yourself “I feel more confident” (inhalation) “and relaxed” when exhaling.

Testing Center Details

To help ease your anxiety, know in advance the details involved with the testing center.

- Call the testing center 2 days before to verify your appointment.
- Locate the testing center before taking the exam so that you do not get lost.
- Arrive early, at least 20 minutes before your scheduled time.
- Know the required documents: the authorization-to-test letter and two types of “positive” ID. You will not be allowed to take the test if your ID is not accepted.
- You are assigned a small locker to store your bag, backpack, or jacket inside.

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- Each test-taker is assigned one small cubicle with one computer.
- You can request earplugs; consider this option if you are sensitive to noise.
- Do not forget your computer reading glasses.
- The test-taking area is monitored closely by videotape and microphones.

Identification Issues

One ID should be from an official governmental body (driver's license or passport). Both IDs should have your picture and signature. Expired IDs are not acceptable.

The Night Before the Exam

The following are suggested activities the night before you take the exam:

- Avoid eating a heavy meal or drinking alcohol.
- Get enough sleep. Aim for 7 to 8 hours. Lack of sleep affects memory.
- Set two alarms to wake you up the next morning if you are taking your exam early.

The Day of the Exam

The following activities are suggested the day of the exam:

- Avoid eating a heavy or fatty breakfast (causes heartburn).
- The best meals are a combination of protein (i.e., cheese, eggs, peanut butter, and nuts) with a complex or high-fiber carbohydrate (i.e., whole wheat bread, oatmeal).
- Do not forget to bring some unwrapped hard candy inside your clothes pocket.
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothes and dress in layers.
- Consider limiting the amount of fluid you drink 1 to 2 hours before the test.

Notice: The aforementioned are only suggestions. Use your judgment and choose what works for you. The food suggestions are not meant to be taken as medical advice. If doing any of these things is contraindicated for you, please do not do them. Consult your health provider for food advice if you have dietary and/or health restrictions.