

Test Taking Tips



References

TEST TAKING TIPS

I. Information About CCRN/CCRN-E/K Exams

AACN-CCRN Adult Content Blueprint

II. Test Taking Strategies

A. Studying for the Exam

1. *The AACN Core Curriculum for Critical Care Nursing* by J. Alspach published by Saunders - considered The TEXTBOOK for the exam. 6th edition published February 2006

AACN Certification and Core Review for High Acuity and Critical Care. 6th ed. J. Alspach Editor. Test Question text with CD. Published 2007

2. A Current Critical Care Nursing Text, Pathophysiology and Pharmacology Texts are Excellent References
3. Practice Questions are a **MUST**
 - ✓ AACN has practice books
 - ✓ AACN has practice CDs, new question book had CD
 - ✓ AACN has self assessment exam via web page – SAE Other Publishers have question books and CDs
 - ✓ Certification Prep Review Column in *Critical Care Nurse*
 - ✓ Do Questions to Identify areas of Strength and Weakness and Create Study Plan from Results
 - ✓ Monitor Time When Taking Practice Exams
 - ✓ Evaluate Reasons you Got Particular Items Correct or Incorrect (test taking, question reading or content)

B. Applying to Take the Exam

Read directions carefully and remember to include everything required in the application. An incomplete application will delay the scheduling of the exam. Can apply on line or with paper application. Once application is accepted you will be notified and have 90 days to take exam.

C. Day of the Exam

- ✎ Know Where you are Going & Give Yourself Plenty of Time to Get There
- ✎ Wear Something Comfortable and Bring a Sweater or Jacket
- ✎ Get a Good Night's Sleep the Night Before
- ✎ Remember to Eat
- ✎ Don't Bring a Lot of Stuff with You – you can not take it in the room anyway

D. Taking the Exam

1. Read Each Question Carefully

- ✎ Read the stem and identify what it is asking before reading the choices (distractors)
- ✎ Consider the correct answer before reading the distractors
- ✎ Read all the distractors before making a selection
- ✎ Once making a choice go back and read the question again to see if this choice answers the question

2. Don't Read Into the Question

- ✎ Avoid asking "What if?"
- ✎ Avoid comparing to similar clinical simulations from work and selecting the response that matches what you did at work. Clinical experience is a great help but remember to answer the question that is being asked
- ✎ If the answer you "want" is not there reread the question – maybe you missed something. Select the best answer from the choices you are offered

3. Look for Key Words

- ✎ All the responses might be correct depending on the question that is asked. Key words help to direct your selection
- ✎ Early or Late
- ✎ Best
- ✎ First
- ✎ Time Frame: Initial, Pre-Op, Post-OP
- ✎ Immediately
- ✎ Always or Never
- ✎ Most Likely or Least Likely

- ✎ Nursing Process: Assessment, Plan, Intervention, Evaluation
- ✎ Prioritize: Remember ABCs always come as first priority

4. Answer All Questions

- ✎ A non answered question counts the same as an incorrect answer. No penalty for guessing
- ✎ You can mark questions to return to, but select your best choice before continuing

5. Changing Answers

- ✎ As a rule your first choice is usually the best choice
- ✎ Only change answers if you were unsure to begin with and upon careful consideration feel another option is correct
- ✎ Don't let distracters of other questions make you change your mind. Remember they are called distracters for a reason
- ✎ When in doubt Don't Change It!

6. Keep Your Eye on The Time

- ✎ Make a plan before the test
- ✎ Monitor progress throughout test
- ✎ If running short and a question is long consider skipping it to answer two shorter questions
- ✎ Continue to consider every response carefully even if running behind

III. Celebrate!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

CCRN/CCRN-E/K Review

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SPEAKER BIO

Carol A. Rauen RN-BC, MS, CCNS, CCRN, PCCN, CEN

Carol Rauen has over thirty years experience in critical care, including roles as staff nurse, nurse clinician, nurse manager, critical care educator, and clinical nurse specialist. She has worked in Coronary Care, Surgical/Trauma ICU, Cardiovascular ICU and the Emergency Department. She practiced at the Univ. of Maryland, Univ. of Chicago, Medical College of Virginia, Williamsburg Community Hospital, the Washington Hospital Center, Inova Fairfax and Georgetown Univ. Medical Center. She received her BSN and MS from the University of Maryland. Her MS is in Trauma & Critical Care Nursing. From 1992 - 2004 she worked at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. For the first six years she was a clinical nurse specialist and nurse manager in the medical center and for the last six years as an Assistant Professor at the School of Nursing & Health Studies. Carol currently serves as an independent critical care clinical nurse specialist and education consultant and works clinical in the ED at Outer Banks Hospital. She has published widely in the nursing literature, including eight book chapters in major critical care nursing texts and multiple journal articles. She currently serves on the editorial board of *AACN Advanced Critical Care* and as a contributing editor for *Critical Care Nurse*. Carol is an experienced lecturer and nurse educator, having spoken at the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) National Teaching Institute (NTI) since 1992. She served as president of the Greater Washington D.C. chapter of AACN and as chairperson for the 1998 NTI and 2004 Advanced Practice Work Group. She received a Circle of Excellence Award from AACN in 2013. She resides on the Outer Banks of North Carolina with her husband and dogs. Carol received her CCRN certification in 1985 and has maintained certification since that time. She received her CCNS certification in 2003, PCCN certification in 2006 and CEN in 2011 and ANCC Gerontological Nursing certification in 2013.

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