



**Registered Medical Assistant (RMA)
Certification Examination Competencies
and Examination Specifications**

Summary Table

	Work Area	Number of Questions	Percentage of Exam
I.	Anatomy and Physiology	44	20.9%
II.	Administrative Medical Assisting	56	26.7%
III.	Clinical Procedural Tasks	39	18.6%
IV.	Clinical Patient Interaction	71	33.8%
Total		210	100.0%

Question Weightings, Work Areas, Task Areas, and Competencies

Number of items

[44] **I. ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY (20.9% of exam)**

A. Body Systems

1. Identify the structure and function of the following systems:

- skeletal nervous
- muscular respiratory
- endocrine cardiovascular/circulatory
- urinary integumentary
- reproductive special senses
- gastrointestinal

2. Disorders and diseases
Identify and define various:

- a. disease processes
- b. conditions or states of health
- c. health-related syndromes

3. Wellness and nutrition

- a. Identify nutritional factors that are required for, or influence, wellness
- b. Identify factors associated with exercise that are required for, or influence, wellness#

c. Identify factors associated with lifestyle choices that are required for, or influence, wellness

B. Medical Terminology

1. Word parts

a. Identify word parts: root, prefixes, and suffixes

2. Definitions

a. Define medical terms

3. Common abbreviations and symbols

a. Identify and understand utilization of medical abbreviations and symbols

4. Spelling

a. Spell medical terms accurately

5. Terminology

a. Define terminology associated with specialty examinations

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II. ADMINISTRATIVE MEDICAL ASSISTING (26.7% of exam)

A. Insurance

1. Identify and define terminology associated with various insurance types in the medical office

2. Identify and understand various health insurance plans

3. Understand and explain explanation of benefits (EOB)

4. Identify coding systems

a. Identify HIPAA-mandated coding systems and references:

ICD-10-CM

CPT

HCPC

b. Properly apply diagnosis and procedure codes to insurance claims

B. Medical Receptionist/Secretarial/Clerical

1. Reception

a. Employ appropriate communication skills when receiving and greeting patients

b. Understand basic emergency triage in coordinating patient arrivals

c. Screen visitors and salespersons arriving at the office #

d. Obtain patient demographics and information

e. Understand and maintain patient confidentiality during check-in procedures

f. Prepare patient record

g. Assist patients into examination rooms

2. Scheduling

a. Employ appointment scheduling system

i. Identify and employ various scheduling styles (wave, open, etc.)

b. Employ proper procedures for cancellations and missed appointments

- c. Understand referral and authorization process
 - d. Understand and manage patient recall system #
 - e. Schedule non-office appointments (hospital admissions, diagnostic tests, surgeries)
3. Oral and written communication
 - a. Employ appropriate telephone etiquette
 - b. Perform appropriate telephone triage
 - c. Instruct patients via telephone
 - d. Inform patients of test results per physician instruction
 - e. Receive, process, and document results received from outside provider
 - f. Compose correspondence employing acceptable business format
 - g. Employ effective written communication skills adhering to ethics and laws of confidentiality
 - h. Employ active listening skills
 4. Records and chart management
 - a. Manage patient medical record system
 - b. Record diagnostic test results in patient chart
 - c. File patient and physician communication in chart
 - d. File materials according to proper system
 - i. Chronological
 - ii. Alphabetical
 - iii. Problem-oriented medical records (POMR)
 - iv. Subject #
 - e. Protect, store, and retain medical records according to proper conventions and HIPAA privacy regulations
 - f. Prepare and release private health information as required, adhering to state and federal guidelines
 - g. Identify and employ proper documentation procedures adhering to standard charting guidelines
 5. Supplies and equipment management
 - a. Maintain inventory of medical/office supplies and equipment
 - b. Coordinate maintenance and repair of office equipment #
 - c. Maintain equipment maintenance logs according to OSHA regulations
 6. Computer applications
 - a. Identify and understand hardware components
 - b. Identify and understand application of basic software and operating systems
 - c. Recognize software application for patient record maintenance, bookkeeping, and patient accounting system
 - d. Employ procedures for integrity of information and compliance with HIPAA Security and Privacy regulations
 - i. Encryption
 - ii. Firewall software and hardware
 - iii. Personnel passwords
 - iv. Access restrictions
 - v. Activity logs #
 7. Office safety

- a. Maintain office sanitation and comfort
- b. Develop and maintain office safety manual
- c. Develop emergency procedures and policies
- d. Employ procedures in compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines and regulations
 - i. Hazard communication
 - ii. Engineering and Work Practice Controls
 - iii. Employee training program
 - iv. Standard Precautions
- e. Maintain records of biohazardous waste and chemical disposal

C. Medical Law and Ethics

1. Medical law

Identify and understand the application of:

- a. Consents and contracts used in medical practice
- b. Disclosure laws and regulations (including HIPAA Security and Privacy Acts, state, and federal laws)
- c. Laws, regulations, and acts pertaining to the practice of medicine
- d. Scope of practice acts regarding medical assisting
- e. Patient Bill of Rights legislation
- f. Advance Directives

2. Licensure, certification, and registration

- a. Identify credentialing requirements of medical professionals
- b. Understand the application of the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988 (CLIA '88)

3. Terminology

- a. Define terminology associated with medical law

4. Principles of medical ethics and ethical conduct

- a. Identify and employ proper ethics in practice as a medical assistant
- b. Identify the principles of ethics established by the American Medical Association
- c. Identify and understand the application of the AMA Patient Bill of Rights
- d. Recognize unethical practices and identify the proper response
- e. Recognize the importance of professional development through continuing education

D. Human Relations

1. Patient relations

- a. Identify age-group specific responses and support
- b. Identify and employ professional conduct in all aspects of patient care
- c. Understand and properly apply communication methods
- d. Identify and respect cultural and ethnic differences
- e. Respect and care for patients without regard for age, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic level

2. Interpersonal relations
 - a. Employ appropriate interpersonal skills when interacting with:
 - i. employer/administration
 - ii. coworkers
 - iii. vendors and business associates #
 - b. Observe and respect cultural diversity in the workplace

[39] III. CLINICAL MEDICAL ASSISTING (18.6 % of exam)

A. Asepsis

1. Terminology
 - a. Know and understand terminology associated with asepsis
2. Bloodborne pathogens and Universal Precautions
 - a. Identify modes of transmission of infectious pathogens
 - b. Identify procedures that prevent transmission of infectious pathogens
 - c. Understand and apply state and federal OSHA guidelines regarding bloodborne pathogens
 - d. Employ Universal Precautions when risk of contact with infectious pathogens
 - e. Develop and employ training of personnel regarding employee safety and bloodborne pathogens
3. Medical asepsis
 - a. Identify and employ aseptic procedures
 - i. Understand proper hand washing procedures
 - ii. Understand and employ barrier precautions
4. Surgical asepsis
 - a. Identify and employ proper surgical aseptic techniques
 - i. Understand and practice proper surgical hand wash
 - ii. Practice surgical antiseptic skin preparation
 - iii. Understand and respect sterile field boundaries
 - iv. Identify and employ appropriate sterile barrier procedures
 - b. Employ sterile glove techniques
 - c. Employ mask, gown, cap, eye protection, and drape techniques

B. Sterilization

1. Terminology
 - a. Define terminology associated with sanitization, disinfection, and sterilization procedures
2. Sanitization
 - a. Identify procedures for sanitization
 - i. Equipment
 - ii. Examining room
 - iii. Instruments
 - b. Identify chemicals used for sanitization #

3. Disinfection
 - a. Identify procedures for disinfection
 - i. Equipment
 - ii. Instruments
 - b. Identify chemicals used in disinfection #
4. Sterilization
 - a. Identify appropriate procedures for sterilization of
 - i. Instruments
 - ii. Surgical equipment
 - iii. Surgical towels, drapes, or dressings #
 - b. Identify modes of sterilization
 - i. Autoclave
 - ii. Chemical
 - iii. Gas
 - c. Identify appropriate packaging materials used for sterilization #
 - d. Identify quality control procedures #
 - i. Indicator strips #
 - ii. Date labeling #

C. Instruments

1. Identification
 - a. Identify instrument classifications
 - b. Identify common and specialty instruments
 - c. Identify instrument parts
 - i. Handles
 - ii. Locks
 - iii. Ratchets
 - iv. Serrations
 - v. Teeth
2. Instrument uses
 - a. Know the use of common instruments (hemostats, forceps, and scissors)
 - b. Identify instruments used for examinations (gynecological, pediatric, and physical examinations)

D. Laboratory Procedures

1. Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988 (CLIA '88)
 - a. Understand and comply with quality assurance regulations for:
 - i. Training
 - ii. Quality control procedures
 - iii. Proficiency testing
 - iv. Test verification
 - v. Waived testing
 - vi. Level of competency as pertains to medical assistants

2. Terminology
 - a. Define terminology associated with laboratory equipment, procedures, and results
3. Understand and perform laboratory test and quality control program #
 - a. Follow testing protocols #
 - b. Maintain testing records and performance logs #
 - c. Perform daily equipment maintenance and calibration #
 - d. Perform daily control testing #
 - e. Monitor temperature controls #
 - f. Store reagents properly #

E. Minor Surgery

1. Surgical supplies
 - a. Identify instruments commonly used in minor surgery
 - b. Identify supplies commonly used in minor surgery (drapes, bandages, sutures, antiseptics, anesthetics, etc.)
2. Surgical procedures
 - a. Identify common surgical procedures #
 - b. Identify surgical tray preparation #
 - i. Sterile drapes
 - ii. Sterile packs and containers #
 - iii. Sterile set-up, aseptic preparation #
 - c. Understand and perform surgical aseptic hand wash
 - d. Perform surgical skin preparation #
 - e. Understand aseptic technique with sterile gloving
 - f. Identify potential contamination sources
 - g. Demonstrate respect for sterile field #
 - h. Identify procedures to prevent transmission of bloodborne pathogens
 - i. Identify biohazard waste disposal procedures
 - j. Identify procedures for patient protection in laser and electrosurgery #
 - k. Perform dressing and bandaging techniques
 - l. Understand post-operative patient and incision care #
 - m. Perform suture and staple removal #
 - n. Identify disinfection and maintenance procedures for surgical equipment #

[71] IV. CLINICAL PATIENT INTERACTION (33.8% of exam)

A. Patient Education

1. Patient Instruction
Identify and apply proper written and verbal communication to instruct patients in:
 - a. health and wellness
 - b. nutrition
 - c. hygiene
 - d. treatment and medications
 - e. pre- and post-operative care
 - f. body mechanic

g. personal and physical safety

B. Vital Signs and Measurements

1. Terminology

a. Define terminology associated with vital signs and measurements

2. Blood pressure

- a. Understand physiology of blood pressure measurement
- b. Identify the steps in blood pressure measurement
- c. Accurately determine systolic and diastolic pressures
- d. Identify proper recording of blood pressure reading
- e. Recognize normal and abnormal blood pressure readings

3. Pulse

- a. Understand pulse physiology
- b. Identify pulse points and appropriate use of each
- c. Employ proper procedure for accurate pulse measurement
- d. Record pulse measurement using accepted charting standards
- e. Recognize normal values and deviations from normal

4. Respiration

- a. Understand respiration cycle and physiology
- b. Accurately observe and measure respiratory rate
- c. Record respiratory rate using accepted charting standards
- d. Recognize normal measurements and deviations from normal

5. Temperature

- a. Identify types of thermometers and understand use of each
- b. Understand the procedures for obtaining temperature measurements
 - i. Aural
 - ii. Oral
 - iii. Rectal
 - iv. Axillary
- c. Identify normal and abnormal temperature values for each method
- d. Recognize fever classifications and emergent values for each age group
- e. Record temperature measurements using accepted charting standards

6. Patient Measurement

- a. Understand the significance of height and weight in relation to nutrition, health, and disease #
- b. Identify the steps to accurately measure patient height and weight
- c. Identify proper procedures in measuring pediatric weight and length, chest and head circumference
- d. Record measurements using accepted charting standard
- e. Recognize changes indicating normal versus deviation from normal #

C. Physical Examinations

1. Medical history
 - a. Obtain patient history employing appropriate terminology and abbreviations
 - b. Differentiate between subjective and objective information
 - c. Understand and employ SOAP and POMR charting systems for recording information

2. Patient positions
 - a. Identify patient positions for examinations
 - i. Sims', knee-chest, Fowler's, lithotomy
 - ii. Understand draping method for each position #
 - b. Identify and define body positions
 - i. Supine, prone, dorsal recumbent

3. Methods of examination
 - a. Define methods of examination
 - i. Auscultation
 - ii. Palpation
 - iii. Mensuration
 - iv. Percussion
 - b. Understand use of each examination method

4. Specialty examinations
Identify examination procedures in specialty practices:
 - a. Pediatrics
 - i. Apgar scores
 - ii. Growth charts
 - iii. Infant and child's mensuration
 - o Length and weight
 - o Head and chest circumference
 - b. Obstetrics and gynecology
 - i. Routine obstetrical examinations
 - o Fundal height
 - o Fetal heart tones
 - o Ultrasound
 - o Pregnancy tests: urine and serum
 - ii. Papanicolaou (PAP) smears
 - iii. Breast and pelvic examinations
 - c. Proctology
 - i. Occult blood and guaiac stool examination
 - ii. Proctoscopy, sigmoidoscopy, and colonoscopy
 - d. Urology
 - i. Urinalysis
 - ii. Cystoscopy
 - e. Radiologic/diagnostic imaging procedures #

5. Visual acuity
 - a. Identify and perform procedures for measuring visual acuity in adult and pediatric

patients

- b. Identify and perform procedures for measuring color vision acuity #
- c. Identify normal measurements and deviations from normal #

D. Clinical Pharmacology

1. Terminology

- a. Define terminology associated with pharmacology
- b. Identify and define common prescription abbreviations

2. Parenteral medications

- a. Identify steps in administering injections
 - i. Intramuscular
 - ii. Subcutaneous
 - iii. Intradermal
 - iv. Z-tract
- b. Identify proper needle size and syringe for each injection type
- c. Identify syringe parts
 - i. Plunger and rubber stopper
 - ii. Tip (slip and Luer-Lok™)
 - iii. Flange
 - iv. Barrel
- d. Identify available injection systems (Tubex and Carpuject®) #
- e. Identify injection sites and maximum volume for each
- f. Perform calculations for dosages, including conversions
- g. Perform 6 “rights” when dispensing medications
- h. Identify medication availability
 - i. Multidose vials
 - ii. Ampules
 - iii. Unit dose vials
 - iv. Pre-filled cartridge-needle units
- i. Define hazards and prevention measures associated with parenteral medications
- j. Understand proper disposal of parenteral equipment

3. Prescriptions

- a. Understand drug schedules and legal prescription requirements for each
- b. Understand procedures for completing prescriptions and authorization of medical refills
- c. Identify and perform proper documentation of medication transactions
- d. Provide patient education on prescriptions

4. Drugs

- a. Identify Drug Enforcement Agency regulations for ordering, dispensing, prescribing, storing, and documenting regulated drugs
- b. Identify and define drug categories #
- c. Identify commonly used drugs #
- d. Identify and describe routes of medication administration
 - i. Parenteral
 - ii. Rectal

- iii. Topical
- iv. Vaginal
- v. Sublingual
- vi. Oral
- vii. Inhalation
- viii. Instillation
- e. Demonstrate ability to use drug references (Physician's Desk Reference) #

E. Therapeutic Modalities

- 1. Modalities
 - a. Identify procedures for heat treatments
 - i. Hot pack
 - ii. Moist compress
 - iii. Heat lamp
 - iv. Paraffin bath
 - v. Whirlpool bath
 - b. Identify procedures for cold treatments
 - i. Ice pack
 - ii. Cold compress
 - c. Identify procedure for ultrasound treatments #
 - d. Maintain familiarity with range-of-motion exercises
 - e. Recognize isotonic and isometric exercises #
- 2. Alternative therapies
 - a. Identify and define alternative therapies #
 - i. Chiropractic #
 - ii. Massage #
 - iii. Acupuncture and acupressure #
- 3. Patient instruction
 - a. Instruct patients in the use of assistive devices
 - i. Crutches and canes
 - ii. Wheelchairs
 - iii. Walkers
 - iv. Splints and slings
 - b. Instruct patients in home therapeutic treatments #
 - c. Instruct patients in proper body mechanics #

F. Laboratory Procedures

- 1. Laboratory testing and specimen collection
 - a. Identify appropriate laboratory testing and procedures for specimen collection and handling of
 - i. Urine (random, clean catch, timed, and drug screen)
 - ii. Blood (venipuncture and capillary stick)
 - iii. Throat culture swabs
 - iv. Stool for occult blood

- v. Sputum
- vi. Spinal fluid #
- b. Perform waived laboratory procedures
 - i. Microhematocrit and hemoglobin
 - ii. Blood glucose by reagent or personal monitor
 - iii. Sedimentation rate
 - iv. Urine human chorionic gonadotropin
 - v. Urinalysis by reagent dipstick
 - vi. Prepare specimen slides for evaluation #
 - vii. Prepare culture plates for incubation #
- c. Know training requirements for moderate and complex laboratory procedures #
- d. Recognize normal and abnormal values of common laboratory results #
- e. Know common laboratory tests and proper patient preparation for each

G. Electrocardiography (ECG)

- 1. Standard, 12-lead electrocardiogram
 - a. Identify procedure for obtaining 12-lead electrocardiogram
 - i. Patient preparation
 - ii. Lead placement
 - iii. Identify leads and marking codes
 - iv. Obtain electrocardiograph reading
 - b. Identify and eliminate artifacts
 - c. Identify cardiac cycle during electrocardiogram
- 2. Mounting techniques #
 - a. Identify procedure for mounting readings #
 - b. Recognize abnormal readings for mounting #
- 3. Other electrographic procedures #
 - a. Identify rhythm strip #
 - b. Identify treadmill examination (exercise ECG) #
 - c. Identify Holter monitor #

H. First Aid, CPR, and Emergency Response

- 1. First Aid procedures
 - a. Maintain emergency (crash) cart #
 - b. Identify injuries, recognize emergencies, and provide appropriate response
- 2. Legal responsibilities
 - a. Understand protection and limits of the Good Samaritan Act
 - b. Understand scope of practice when providing First Aid and CPR #
 - c. Understand mandatory reporting guidelines and procedures #
- 3. CPR Procedures
 - a. Identify criteria for and steps in performing CPR and the Heimlich maneuver

TASK INVENTORY NOTES

The tasks included in this inventory are considered by American Medical Technologists to be representative of the medical assisting job role. This document should be considered dynamic, to reflect the medical assistant's current role with respect to contemporary health care. Therefore, tasks may be added, removed, or modified on an ongoing basis.

Competencies flagged by “#” are considered elements of the medical assisting role, but not directly assessed on the certification examination.