



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

Summary Table

	Work Area	Number of Questions	Percentage of Exam
I.	General Medical Assisting	65	31.0%
II.	Administrative Medical Assisting	30	14.0%
III.	Clinical Medical Assisting	115	55%
Total		210	100.0%

Question Weightings, Work Areas, Task Areas, and Competencies

Number of items

[65]

I. GENERAL MEDICAL ASSISTING (31.0% of exam)

A. Body Systems

1. Identify the structure and function of various body systems:

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

2. Identify and define various disorders and diseases:

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

a. 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

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. Credentialing
 - a. Identify and understand Medical Assistant credentialing requirements
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
5. Understand and comply with HIPAA regulations
6. Identify and understand the Medical Assistants' Scope of Practice
7. Understand the implications of Advance Directives

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

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II. ADMINISTRATIVE MEDICAL ASSISTING (14.0% of exam)

A. Insurance

1. Identify and define terminology associated with various insurance types in the medical office
2. Understand and explain explanation of benefits (EOB)
3. 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
4. Understand and implement the process of obtaining prior authorizations and referrals

B. Clerical

1. Explain administrative responsibilities
2. Understand and perform proper scheduling procedures
 - 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. Maintain healthcare information
- 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. Describe procedures related to 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

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III. CLINICAL MEDICAL ASSISTING (55.0% of exam)

A. Infection Control

- 1. Define terminology associated with asepsis, sanitization, disinfection, and sterilization procedures
- 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. Describe proper medical and surgical aseptic techniques
 - a. Identify and employ medical aseptic procedures
 - i. Understand proper hand washing procedures
 - ii. Understand and employ barrier precautions
 - b. 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
 - c. Employ sterile glove techniques
 - d. Employ mask, gown, cap, eye protection, and drape techniques
- 4. Identify procedures for sanitization, disinfection, and sterilization

B. Diagnostic 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)

C. Laboratory Procedures

1. Understand Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988 (CLIA '88) and Waived testing
 - 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
4. Identify appropriate laboratory testing and perform specimen collection procedures (e.g., venipuncture, capillary, order of draw, swabs, etc.)
 - 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
5. Understand Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards

D. Minor Surgical Procedures

- 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 #

E. Vital Signs and Measurements

- 1. Terminology
 - a. Define terminology associated with vital signs and mensurations
- 2. Understand and apply proper procedures related to 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. Understand and apply proper procedures related to pulse, respiration, blood oxygen saturation, and temperature measurements

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

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

Blood Oxygen Saturation

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
4. Understand and apply proper procedures related to patient measurements (e.g., head circumference, neck circumference, BMI, etc.)
- 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 #

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

6. Electrocardiography (ECG)

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

7. Administer routine diagnostic tests (e.g., Pulmonary Function Test, Holter Monitor)

G. Clinical Pharmacology

- 1. Terminology
 - a. Define terminology associated with pharmacology
 - b. Identify and define common prescription abbreviations
- 2. Understand and employ proper procedures related to medication administration
 - a. Identify steps in administering injections
 - i. Intramuscular
 - ii. Subcutaneous
 - iii. Intradermal
 - iv. Z-track
 - 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) #

5. Calculate basic pharmacological doses

H. 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 and other Durable Medical Equipment

- 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 #

I. First Aid and Emergency Response

- 1. Identify First Aid procedures
 - a. Maintain emergency (crash) cart #
 - b. Identify injuries, recognize emergencies, and provide appropriate response
- 2. Legal responsibilities
 - a. Understand legal responsibilities associated with the administration of First Aid and BLS CPR
 - b. Understand protection and limits of the Good Samaritan Act
 - c. Understand scope of practice when providing First Aid and CPR #
 - d. Understand mandatory reporting guidelines and procedures #

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.