

ANSWERING PHARMACOLOGY QUESTIONS

12 Points to Answering Pharmacology Questions

1. Patient Safety

- The NCLEX® is concerned about if you will be a SAFE nurse. Always think about what option will lead to your patient being safe. You can automatically exclude options that will put your patient in harm.

2. Focus on Side Effects

- Learn the top 3 side effects with major medication classes. If you know the class and the major side effects associated with that class you greatly increase your chances of answering correctly.

3. ABCs

- Airway, Breathing, Circulation. The ABCs will never go away. Focus on the nursing process and the ABCs with each and every question including side effects.

4. Prefixes and Suffixes

- Learn the most common prefixes and suffixes. This will cut down your total study time tremendously.

5. Look for Patient Clues

- Does the question provide information about the patients original diagnosis? Use general clues in the question about the patient, their history, and their condition. These clues will guide you to the medications they will be taking.

6. General Patient Reaction

- Look for clues in the patients reaction. For example if the patient reports dizziness, this is a clue that you should assess blood pressure. Use your assessment skills to answer pharmacology questions.

7. Generic

- Only generic names will be used on the actual NCLEX®. Although these names can be a bit harder to pronounce, they will provide clues (prefix/suffix) into the type of medication it is which will guide you in choosing the correct answer.

8. Random, Random, Random

- Regardless of how much you study . . . you will get that insanely random medication that no one has ever heard of. In this case just take a deep breath, relax, and use your nursing judgment, critical thinking, and think Patient Safety.

ANSWERING PHARMACOLOGY QUESTIONS

9. Medical Diagnosis

- Does the question identify a medical diagnosis? If you have a working medical diagnosis, use your knowledge to determine what signs and symptoms the patient will have, what medications they will require to manage those symptoms, and what are the main side effects of those medications.

10. Freebies

- If you are already familiar with the medication . . . simply use your knowledge, the nursing process, and critical thinking to answer the question.

11. Med Classes

- Learn to recognize common side effects with major medication classes and the appropriate nursing intervention for each of these side effects.

12. Why is the Medication Given?

- Why is the medication being given. Try to identify a relationship between the medication and the patient's diagnosis. If you have the underlying diagnosis you can generally identify what medication will be given for that condition.