

# **Personal Care Assistant (PCA) COMPETENCY TEST**

## **Georgia Written Examination**

### **I. ROLE OF THE PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANT**

**A PCA may perform certain duties. Mark the following true or false for task may legally perform as a Personal Care Assistant. T=True F=False**

1. Reinforce a dressing.
2. Apply a hot pack.
3. Give an enema.
4. Administer medication.
5. Change a sterile dressing.
6. Assist with change of a colostomy bag.
7. Give a rectal suppository.
8. Give a tubal feeding.
9. Give insulin.
10. Cut Nails.

**CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

11. As a Personal Care Assistant, you:

- A. Work alone.
- B. Work as part of the health care team.
- C. May become the leader of the health care team.
- D. Will never get any further training after orientation.

12. When you work in the home, you will be:

- A. Responsible for making decisions without any help.
- B. Working under the supervision of a professional supervisor.
- C. Away from your office and have no way to contact your employer.
- D. Responsible for calling the physician with information.

13. As a Personal Care Assistant, it is your responsibility to:

- A. Plan the client's care.
- B. Do only the tasks the Registered Nurse or therapist assigns to you.
- C. Try to do your best, but not ask for any help.
- D. Compare assignments with your co-workers.

## **II. COMMUNICATION**

**Mark the following true or false. T=True F=False**

- 14. In the home, it is important to be a good listener.
- 15. Always tell the patient what you are going to do before starting a procedure.
- 16. You only communicate through words.

**CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

17. Which of the following is important in communicating with people:

- A. Courtesy.
- B. Tact.
- C. Listening
- D. All of the above.

18. Body language is:

- A. A way of communicating feelings by using the body, facial expressions and the eyes.
- B. Only used by clients to tell their doctor what is causing them problems?
- C. Only used by persons who are deaf and mute.
- D. The newest dance craze.

19. PCA care for a conscious patient should be preceded by:

- A. Asking the patient for his/her permission to go ahead with the procedure.
- B. Telling the patient you would like to have his/her cooperation.
- C. Giving an explanation of what is going to be done.
- D. Explanation to the patient that the doctor ordered this done.

20. Miss Harris, a Personal Care Assistant, is assigned to care for Mr. Goodway. Miss Harris notices that she feels very angry when she is with Mr. Goodway. What should Miss Harris do because she feels this way?

- A. Tell Mr. Goodway how she is feeling.
- B. Find out if other PCAs have felt this way.
- C. Try to pretend that Mr. Goodway is someone she likes.
- D. Talk with the agency supervisor about the situation.

21. A patient accuses a Personal Care Assistant of stealing five dollars. The PCA has not taken the patient's money, but the patient does not believe this. What should the PCA do?

- A. Ask the other PCAs who care to the patient if they took the five dollars.
- B. Ask the patient why the PCA is being accused.
- C. Offer to give the patient five dollars.
- D. Notify the agency supervisor.

### III. OBSERVATION, REPORTING AND DOCUMENTATION

Mark the following true or false. T=True F=False

- 22. If you do not chart a task that you do for a patient, legally, it was not done.
- 23. If the patient has a new area of skin breakdown, and the nurse is coming in two days, you do not need to report the skin breakdown to your supervisor.
- 24. A rapid pulse and shortness of breath in a patient usually indicates the patient is excited and does not need to be reported to the nurse.

CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.

- 25. The patient tells you he has not moved his bowels in three days. What should you do?
  - A. Tell him not to worry about it.
  - B. Tell him to take a laxative.
  - C. Report it to the nursing supervisor.
  - D. Pretend you didn't hear him.
  
- 26. Which of these actions is the Personal Care Assistant permitted to take in relation to drug administration?
  - A. Recording and reporting the patient's reaction to the medication.
  - B. Handing out nonprescription medications to the patient who asks for them.
  - C. Adjusting the dosage of medications given to the patient.
  - D. Adjusting the times medications are given to fit into the patient's activities schedule.
  
- 27. When a patient complains of pain, what should the Personal Care Assistant do first?
  - A. Ask the patient to describe the pain.
  - B. Call the patient's doctor.
  - C. Offer the patient some warm tea.
  - D. Change the patient's position.
  
- 28. A patient's prescription for heart pills has recently been changed. The home health PCA should notify the agency supervisor immediately if the patient makes which of these comments?
  - A. "The pills are very expensive."
  - B. "These pills are different shape from the pills I used to take."
  - C. "I have a rash on my stomach since I've been taking these pills."
  - D. "I can't take these pills unless I have really cold water to drink."

29. Mrs. Rand, who has diabetes and take insulin regularly, tells the Personal Care Assistant that she feels very nervous and jittery. What should the PCA do immediately?
- A. Take her temperature.
  - B. Find out when she has her next doctor's appointment.
  - C. Have her lid down in bed
  - D. Give her a glass of orange juice.

#### **IV. READING AND RECORDING TEMPARTURE, PULSE AND REPIRATIONS**

Mark the following true or false. T=True F=False

30. Always report a pulse rate if the beats per minute are under 60 or over 100.  
31. The temperature of an unconscious patient should be taken orally since they are not moving about.  
32. Recording a patient's "TPR" or vital signs is not important as long as you remember what they were.

#### **CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

33. For which, if any, of these body areas is 99.6 degrees F. a normal temperature?
- A. Axilla.
  - B. Mouth.
  - C. Rectum.
  - D. None of the above
34. When taking a patient's pulse, you should take it for:
- A. 15 seconds.
  - B. One full minute.
  - C. 5 seconds.
  - D. Two minutes.
35. When a patient's respirations are being counted, it is best that the patient:
- A. Tries to breathe evenly.
  - B. Tries to breathe as deeply as he/she can.
  - C. Sits up straight.
  - D. No be aware that the respirations are being counted.

## **V. INFECTION CONTROL**

**Mark the following true or false. T=True F=False**

- 36. Hand washing is the single best way to decrease the transfer of pathogens.
- 37. Gloves should be worn when handling items soiled by body fluids.
- 38. The catheter drainage bag must be lower than the bladder, but not on the floor.

**CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

39. During a visit, you need to wash your hands after removing gloves:

- A. Before you give physical care to the patient.
- B. After you pet the dog
- C. Before you leave the patient's home.
- D. All of the above.

40. In what situation should gloves be used?

- A. The patient is vomiting.
- B. The patient has been incontinent of stool.
- C. The patient has drainage wound.
- D. All of the above.

## **VI. BODY FUNCTIONS AND CHANGES**

**Mark the following true or false. T=True F=False**

- 41. Diarrhea can cause dehydration and other serious complications and should be reported.
- 42. If a person complains of pain, it is important to have the patient describe the pain and then report it to the nurse and record it in your notes.
- 43. It's normal for most people to complain of pressure, swelling, or bloating in their ankles, feet, stomach or legs.

**CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

44. If you notice the patient's catheter is not draining, the first thing you should do is:

- A. Call your supervisor.
- B. Empty the drainage bag.
- C. Check the tubing to see if it is kinked.
- D. Do nothing, this is the nurse's problem.

45. Which of the following is not recommended for promoting good daily bowel habits:
- A. Plenty of water.
  - B. Laxatives.
  - C. Exercise.
  - D. Well balanced meals.
46. Mrs. Morris has not had a bowel movement for three days. She has always given herself an enema if she does not have a good bowel movement for that long a time. Mrs. Morris asks the Personal Care Assistant to give her an enema. What should the PCA do?
- A. Give Mrs. Morris an enema.
  - B. Tell Mrs. Morris to wait another day.
  - C. Suggest that Mrs. Morris take a laxative first.
  - D. Contact the agency supervisor to discuss the situation.

## **VII. MAINTAINANCE OF A CLEAN, SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mark the following true or false. T=True F=False**

47. Bedrails should never be used to secure vest restraints.
48. Smoking in bed is fine for anyone who is not confused.

**CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

49. Part of your duties as a Personal Care Assistant are to assure a safe home environment. This includes:
- A. Proper infection control with good hand washing.
  - B. Electrical and fire safety.
  - C. Moving things which may cause the patient to fall.
  - D. All of the above.
50. A patient is receiving oxygen through a nasal cannula. What safety precautions should the Personal Care Assistant take?
- A. Keep the television set at least 5 feet from the oxygen tank.
  - B. Do not permit the patient to drink soda.
  - C. Allow no smoking in the patient's room.
  - D. Do not use any lotions that contain oil in the patient's room.

## **VIII. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

**Mark the following true or false. T=True F=False**

- 51. For an injury with profuse bleeding, apply pressure and call for assistance.
- 52. If the patient begins to have a seizure, your first responsibility is to prevent the patient from injuring himself.
- 53. If the patient falls and complains of pain in his hip, you should help him/her to get up and walk to the bed.

**CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

- 54. A patient is choking on some object that is caught in his/her airway. Before first-aid measures are applied, find out:
  - A. If the patient's pulse rate is over 80.
  - B. If the patient can swallow clear fluids.
  - C. If the patient can speak or cough.
  - D. What medications the patient has taken in the past 24 hours.
  
- 55. While giving a bath on a shower chair, the patient suddenly gasps and becomes unresponsive. The PCA should:
  - A. Call for family assistance and continue with the bath.
  - B. Leave the patient and call 911.
  - C. Lower the patient to the floor, call for the family to call 911, determine if CPR is needed and initiate if indicated.
  - D. Tell the family to stay with the patient while you call 911 and the supervisor.
  
- 56. For which of these emergencies is a knowledge of pressure points essential?
  - A. Health stroke.
  - B. Burns.
  - C. Food poisoning.
  - D. Bleeding.
  
- 57. The telephone numbers of all the following are important to a patient. Which number must the Person Care Assistant have next to the telephone?
  - A. The patient's clergyman.
  - B. The drugstore.
  - C. The emergency medical squad.
  - D. The next-door neighbor.

## **IX. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

**Mark the following true or false. T=True F=False**

- 58. Every patient is the same and has the same needs and wants
- 59. It is all right to use any item in the home without asking as long as it is for the patient's personal care.
- 60. You may use the telephone in the patient's home without asking permission.

**CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

- 61. A neighbor has asked you some questions about the patient you are presently taking care of. "Mrs. Cooler is dying, isn't she?" How will you answer her?
  - A. "Mrs. Cooler is doing as well as can be expected."
  - B. "I am sorry, but I cannot discuss Mrs. Cooler."
  - C. "Yes, it's too bad, but she's very ill."
  - D. "How did you know about Mrs. Cooler and her illness?"
  
- 62. Which of these statements about the elderly is true?
  - A. They cannot change.
  - B. They can learn new things.
  - C. They want to become dependent on others.
  - D. They do not enjoy meeting new people.
  
- 63. When working with person who are disabled, the general goal of care is to:
  - A. Provide constant supervision.
  - B. Provide total care.
  - C. Promote maximum self-care and independence within the limits of the person's ability.
  - D. Promote the complete return of the person's abilities.
  
- 64. It is Mrs. Morris' usual time for lunch, but she says she is not hungry yet. This is the first time that Mrs. Morris has made this type of statement. What should the home health PCA do?
  - A. Insist that Mrs. Morris eat at this time.
  - B. Tell Mrs. Morris to let the PCA know when she wants to eat, and remind her that it is important that she have lunch.
  - C. Tell Mrs. Morris that if she does not eat by herself, she will have to be fed.
  - D. Tell Mrs. Morris that it took a lot of time to prepare the food and that she should eat it while it is fresh.

65. The ability to make observations is even more important when working with infants and young children than it is when working with adults. The chief reason for this is that infants and young children:
- A. Do not like to be told what to do.
  - B. Are usually sicker than adults.
  - C. Enjoy human contact more than adults.
  - D. Cannot explain how they feel.

## **X. PERSONAL CARE**

**Mark the following true or false. T=True F=False**

- 66. It is important to keep a patient covered during a bed bath except for the part being washed.
- 67. Massaging of bony prominences helps to prevent skin breakdown by increasing the blood supply to the area.
- 68. When giving peri-care to a patient after a BM, wash using a front to back motion in order not to spread fecal material to other areas.

**CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

69. When giving the patient a bath, if the water is too hot, it can injure (burn) the person's skin. If it is too cold, it can chill the person. Therefore you should test the Water Temperature before beginning the bath by:
- A. Adjusting both the Hot and Cold Water so as to mix them.
  - B. Using the patient's thermometer and read the temperature.
  - C. Asking the patients to tell you if it is too hot or too cold.
  - D. Finding out if the water is warm (not hot or cold) to the touch on the inside of your wrist.
70. Which of the following is most appropriate practice to promote good skin care in the elderly:
- A. Keep the skin clean and well moisturized.
  - B. Apply alcohol to bare areas of the skin.
  - C. Wash daily with scented soaps
  - D. All of the above.
71. If dentures are not worn when sleeping, where should you store them?
- A. Wrap in a washcloth.
  - B. Put in a sterile container.
  - C. Wrap in a gauze pad.
  - D. Place in a clean container in clean water.

72. An elderly male patient occasionally wets his trousers. What should the home health PCA do?
- A. Give him fluid with his meals only.
  - B. Avoid giving his coffee and tea.
  - C. Tell him if urinates o himself he will have to be put in diapers.
  - D. Encourage him to go to the bathroom at least every two hours.
73. In giving foot care to a patient who has diabetes, the Personal Care Assistant may take which of these actions?
- A. Clean under the toenails.
  - B. Cut the toenails.
  - C. Soak the patient's feet for more than 5 minutes in a basin of warm water.
  - D. Put lotion on the patient's feet before drying them.

## **XI. SAFE TRANSFER TECHNIQUES AND AMBULATION**

**Mark the following true or false. T=True False**

74. Always transfer a patient towards his good side.  
75. There is no need to be near an object to pick it up, just reach.  
76. It's best to use a gait belt if a patient is unsteady.

**CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

77. A patient lying on his back has slid down in bed and needs help in moving up again. To start this, the patient should, if possible:
- A. Raise himself on his elbows.
  - B. Separate his legs widely.
  - C. Arch his ack.
  - D. Flex his knees and push with his heels.
78. Before helping a patient into or out of a wheelchair, which of these actions are necessary?
- A. Have the brakes unlocked and leave the foot pieces down.
  - B. Lock the brakes and fold the foot pieces up.
  - C. Have the brake unlocked and the foot pieces up.
  - D. Lock the brakes and leave the foot pieces down.

79. When assisting a patient to walk with his walker, you should:
- A. Clear a pathway and remove all safety hazards.
  - B. Stay close to the patient's side.
  - C. Stand on the other side of the room.
  - D. A and B.
80. A patient who has been on bed rest is to get up in a chair. The Personal Care Assistant helps the patient to sit on the edge of the bed. The patient says, "I am dizzy." What should the PCA do?
- A. Rub the patient's feet.
  - B. Help the patient to a standing position and see if the dizziness goes away.
  - C. Put a cool compress on the patient's head.
  - D. Support the patient in a sitting position and wait a minute or so to see if the dizziness goes away.
81. Patient has had a stroke and has a right-side weakness. The patient can walk with a little assistance. It is best for the Personal Care Assistant to assist the patient by walking in which of these positions?
- A. Directly in front of the patient.
  - B. Directly in back of the patient.
  - C. On the patient's left side.
  - D. On the patient's right side.
82. Mr. Sticke is 76 years old, needs help with bathing, and has a Foley catheter in place. He has great difficulty walking and uses a wheelchair. When helping Mr. Sticke from the bed to the wheelchair, which of these actions is essential?
- A. Place the foot supports of the wheelchair so that he can step up on them.
  - B. Have a blanket draped in the wheelchair.
  - C. Have the brakes on the wheelchair in a locked position.
  - D. Place a pillow on the seat of the wheelchair.

## **XII. NORMAL RANGE OF MOTION**

**Mark the following true or false. T=True F=False**

83. Passive range of motion exercises are for the prevention of contractures in patients with paralyzed limbs.
84. During range of motion exercises, if you feel resistance or the patient complains of pain, you should continue anyway.
85. It is best to have a pillow between the legs of a patient with a new hip replacement.

**CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

86. To prevent bedsores in the elderly, you should:

- A. Change the patient's position every two hours if they are unable to do so themselves.
- B. Get the patient out of bed if they are allowed to do so.
- C. Ensure adequate nutrition with special emphasis on protein intake.
- D. All of the above.

87. The Personal Care Assistant should be sure to take which of these actions when caring for a newborn baby?

- A. Support the baby's head and neck when picking the baby up.
- B. Clean the inside of the baby's ears with cotton swabs.
- C. Use petroleum jelly to keep the area around the baby's naval moist.
- D. Hold the baby only at feeding and bathing times.

88. Which of these statements describes good body mechanics?

- A. Carry heavy objects as far away from the body as possible.
- B. Bend the knees when lifting an object off the floor.
- C. Bend over at the waist when lifting an object from the floor.
- D. Lift rather than push a heavy object.

89. When caring for a patient who is on bed rest, what should the PCA do to prevent bed sore?

- A. Keep the top sheets well tucked in.
- B. Keep the bottom sheet free of wrinkles.
- C. Use only sheets that are 100% cotton the patient's bed.
- D. Use only woolen blankets to cover the patient.

### **XIII. NUTRITION**

**Mark the following true or false. T=True F=False**

90. Soy sauces is good to spice up a low salt diet.

91. A regular diet is a well-balanced diet with no restrictions.

92. Bread and potatoes are a good source of protein.

**CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

93. Foods on a liquid diet would include:

- A. Chicken, eggs, and toast
- B. Chopped and strained foods.
- C. Broth, tea and jello.
- D. Lightly seasoned foods.

94. Foods that are high in vitamin C include:

- A. Oranges, tomatoes and watermelon.
- B. Potatoes, raisins and bananas.
- C. Liver, beef and chicken.
- D. Cheese, milk and cottage cheese.

95. If there is 50cc left in glass and the glass holds 150cc you should record the intake as:

- A. 90cc.
- B. 120cc.
- C. 100cc.
- D. 50cc.

96. Milk is a good source of calcium. Which of these foods is also high in calcium?

- A. Cheese.
- B. Bananas.
- C. Orange juice.
- D. Raisins.

97. When patients do not have enough fluids, they may develop which of these problems?

- A. Diarrhea.
- B. Swelling.
- C. Constipation.
- D. Dandruff.

98. If a patient is to have a fluid intake record kept, the right time to record the patient's fluid is:

- A. When the fluids are served to the patient.
- B. When the patient has drank the fluids.
- C. Every 2 hours.
- D. After each meal.

99. Patient on low salt diets are usually allowed to have which of these foods?

- A. Hard cheese.
- B. Canned soups.
- C. Raisins.
- D. Olives.

**XVI. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN FAMILIES**

**CHOOSE ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW AND CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING LETTER.**

100. Patients sometimes express religious beliefs with which the Personal Care Assistant does not agree. In dealing with these situations, which of these understandings should the PCA use as a guide?

- A. Patients have a right to their own beliefs, which should be respected.
- B. Patients should be told not to discuss their beliefs with PCAs.
- C. PCAs should explain their beliefs to patients.
- D. PCAs should pretend to have the same beliefs that patients have.