

**NHA Certified Patient Care Technician/Assistant (CPCT/A)  
Test Plan for the CPCT/A Exam**

*100 Scored Items/20 Pretest Items  
Exam Time: 2 hours*

*\*Based on The Results of a Job Analysis Completed in 2025*

*This document provides both a summary and detailed outline of the topics that may be covered on the CPCT/A Certification Examination. The summary examination outline specifies domains that are covered on the examination and the number of test items per domain.*

*The detailed outline adds to the summary outline by including task and knowledge statements associated with each domain on the test plan. Task statements reflect the duties that a candidate will need to know how to properly perform. Knowledge statements reflect information that a candidate will need to know and are in support of task statements. Items on the examination might require recall and critical thinking pertaining to a knowledge statement, a task statement, or both.*

*Task statements are listed in the left-hand column of the test plan. Knowledge statements are listed in the right-hand column.*

### CPCT/A Summary Examination Outline

<b>DOMAIN</b>	<b># of Items on Examination</b>	<b>% of Items on Examination</b>
1. Patient Care	43	43
2. Compliance, Safety, and Professional Responsibility	19	19
3. Infection Control	16	16
4. Phlebotomy and Nonblood Specimen Collection	12	12
5. EKG	10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Domain 1: Patient Care (43 items)**

Tasks	Knowledge of:
<p>1A. Provide basic patient care under the direction of nursing staff (e.g., bathing, bed-making, catheter care, assisting with activities of daily living [ADLs], positioning).</p> <p>1B. Provide emotional support for patient and family while performing patient care, including but not limited to, anticipating patient's needs for support.</p> <p>1C. Assist patient with use of medical devices (e.g., nasal cannula, suction equipment, monitors).</p> <p>1D. Recognize and adapt approach to care for patient who has functional limitations (e.g., physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental impairment).</p> <p>1E. Obtain, record, monitor, and report vital signs.</p> <p>1F. Weigh patient (e.g., standing, wheelchair-bound, using bed scales).</p> <p>1G. Assist patient with personal care needs (e.g., dressing, grooming).</p> <p>1H. Monitor, record, and report changes in bodily functions (e.g., urine output, emesis, bowel movements) related to conditions.</p> <p>1I. Monitor, measure, and record intake and output (e.g., percentage of meal eaten, mL of fluid, urine/stool count).</p> <p>1J. Assist with care for patient who has a feeding tube (e.g., position in bed, take aspiration precautions, observe tubing for leakage, kinks, or problems).</p> <p>1K. Provide skin care (e.g., reposition, apply nonprescription creams or moisture barriers) to promote skin integrity and prevent skin breakdown.</p> <p>1L. Identify and report changes in skin integrity.</p> <p>1M. Perform purposeful patient rounding.</p> <p>1N. Report any changes in patient's condition (e.g., level of consciousness, shortness of breath).</p> <p>1O. Evaluate patient's needs and prioritize patient care accordingly.</p> <p>1P. Recognize and report values outside the reference range (e.g., blood glucose levels, vital signs) to the appropriate provider.</p> <p>1Q. Recognize and report edema.</p> <p>1R. Obtain, document, and report patient's pain level and report patient pain using a pain scale.</p>	<p>k1. Structure and function of body systems</p> <p>k2. Common disease processes (e.g., cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus, cancers, COPD)</p> <p>k3. Proper body mechanics when providing patient care</p> <p>k4. Communication techniques, (e.g., therapeutic, empathetic, verbal and non-verbal) and interpersonal skills</p> <p>k5. Culturally competent care (e.g., consider age, ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender identity and preferred pronouns, food preferences)</p> <p>k6. Considerations in caring for patient who has functional limitations (e.g., physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental impairment)</p> <p>k7. Vital signs, parameters, and methods for obtaining them</p> <p>k8. Considerations related to vital signs for specific populations (e.g., pediatric or geriatric) and special conditions (e.g., venous or arterial access line, mastectomy)</p> <p>k9. Types of scales (e.g., electronic, bed, mechanical) and their use</p> <p>k10. Types of patient beds (e.g., sand, air, bariatric) and how to operate them</p> <p>k11. Bed making techniques (e.g., closed, open, surgical, occupied)</p> <p>k12. Patient bathing techniques (e.g., partial bath, sitz bath, full bed bath, CHG bath)</p> <p>k13. Patient personal care, grooming, and dressing procedures (e.g., shampooing and hair care, shaving)</p> <p>k14. Oxygen delivery systems (e.g., rebreather masks, nasal cannula)</p> <p>k15. Purpose and use of an incentive spirometer</p> <p>k16. Oral care (e.g., denture care, special mouth care)</p> <p>k17. Oral suctioning</p> <p>k18. Perineal care</p> <p>k19. Catheter insertion and removal</p> <p>k20. Types of feeding tubes (e.g., percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy [PEG], gastrostomy [G], nasogastric [NG])</p>

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<p>1S. Recognize and report signs and symptoms of a wound infection.</p> <p>1T. Recognize and report visual abnormalities in patient specimens (e.g., stool, sputum, urine, emesis).</p> <p>1U. Assist patient with and/or perform ostomy care.</p> <p>1V. Assist with administering patient enemas.</p> <p>1W. Remove peripheral IVs.</p> <p>1X. Assist in sterile and aseptic dressing changes.</p> <p>1Y. Assist patient with respiratory exercises (e.g., turn, cough, and deep breathing (TCDB), incentive spirometry, nebulizer treatment).</p> <p>1Z. Perform, assist with, and/or give instructions for passive range-of-motion (ROM), active range of motion (AROM), and assistive active range of motion (AAROM) exercises for patient.</p> <p>1AA. Assist patient with adaptive devices for ADLs (e.g., feeding and dressing devices).</p> <p>1BB. Assist patient with ambulation, using assistive devices if needed.</p> <p>1CC. Apply immobility splints to patient (e.g., elastic bandage, knee immobilizer, off-loading boot).</p> <p>1DD. Assist with orthotic and/or prosthetic devices (e.g., donning and doffing).</p> <p>1EE. Transfer non-weight-bearing patient (e.g., stretcher to bed, bed to chair/wheelchair).</p> <p>1FF. Transfer partial weight-bearing patient.</p> <p>1GG. Transport patient via bed, stretcher, or wheelchair.</p> <p>1HH. Apply sequential compression devices (SCD) and antiembolism stockings and/or compression hose.</p> <p>1II. Perform pre-operative care, prep patients for screening and/or testing prior to diagnostic procedures and surgeries.</p> <p>1JJ. Provide assistance with or administer first aid.</p> <p>1KK. Perform basic life support (BLS) for health care providers (i.e., CPR).</p> <p>1LL. Provide one-to-one monitoring for patients who have special precautions (e.g., suicidal, aggressive, disoriented, in withdrawal).</p> <p>1MM. Provide palliative care to patient who is receiving hospice care.</p> <p>1NN. Support the coping mechanisms of patient and family who are dealing with grief, death, and dying.</p> <p>1OO. Perform postmortem care.</p>	<p>k21. Considerations for patient who has a feeding tube (e.g., timing, type, positioning)</p> <p>k22. Aspiration precautions for patient who has difficulty swallowing (e.g., patient positioning, food preparation, thickened liquids)</p> <p>k23. Nutritional support and dietary needs and restrictions</p> <p>k24. Basic body positions (e.g., prone, supine, Fowler's) and when to use them</p> <p>k25. Characteristics and measurement of normal and abnormal intake and output</p> <p>k26. Signs of impaired circulation</p> <p>k27. Stages of skin breakdown</p> <p>k28. Approaches to prevent skin breakdown (e.g., turn patient, apply draw sheets, wedge, heel and elbow protectors, and/or barrier cream)</p> <p>k29. Elements of purposeful patient rounding (e.g., pain, positioning, proximity/physical environment, personal needs)</p> <p>k30. Signs and symptoms of changing patient condition (e.g., loss of consciousness, shortness of breath, change to psychological or emotional state, stroke)</p> <p>k31. Values outside the expected reference range (e.g., vital signs, lab values)</p> <p>k32. Factors to consider when prioritizing patient needs (e.g., fall risk, elopement risk, rapid responses, stat laboratory values)</p> <p>k33. Critical thinking (e.g., considering consequences, basing decisions on information and impact of actions)</p> <p>k34. Ostomy care</p> <p>k35. Enema types and methods</p> <p>k36. IV removal processes and techniques</p> <p>k37. Indicators of the need for a dressing change</p> <p>k38. Aseptic and sterile dressing techniques</p> <p>k39. Wound care techniques and types of dressings</p> <p>k40. Purpose and use of turn, cough, deep breath (TCDB) exercises</p> <p>k41. Range-of-motion (ROM) techniques (passive, active, and assistive active).</p> <p>k42. Adaptive devices and their operation/use</p> <p>k43. Ambulation devices, walkers, and crutches</p>
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<p>1PP. Follow the Five Rights of Delegation.</p>	<p>k44. Splint application</p> <p>k45. Donning and doffing techniques for orthotics and prosthetic devices</p> <p>k46. Types of transfers (e.g., stretcher to bed, bed to wheelchair)</p> <p>k47. Patient transport considerations (e.g., back into elevator, move slowly over bumps, raise side rails)</p> <p>k48. Mechanical lift operation, including safety precautions</p> <p>k49. Purpose and use of gait belt</p> <p>k50. Purpose, use, and types of sequential compression devices (SCD) and anti-embolism stockings and/or compression hose</p> <p>k51. Appearances and quantities of normal and abnormal specimens (e.g., urine, stool, sputum)</p> <p>k52. Signs and symptoms of edema</p> <p>k53. Signs and symptoms of pain and pain scales (e.g., FACES, numbers)</p> <p>k54. Hot and cold therapies (e.g., warm compress, ice bag, disposable cold pack)</p> <p>k55. Basic first aid techniques</p> <p>k56. American Heart Association CPR guidelines, signs of need for CPR, and basic life support for healthcare providers</p> <p>k57. Symptoms of withdrawal</p> <p>k58. Warning signs of suicide</p> <p>k59. Guidelines for one-on-one monitoring based on patient's specific needs or condition</p> <p>k60. Positive and negative coping mechanisms</p> <p>k61. Kübler-Ross' five stages of grief</p> <p>k62. End-of-life care</p> <p>k63. Postmortem care processes</p> <p>k64. Five Rights of Delegation (Right task, Right circumstance, Right person, Right direction and communication, and Right supervision)</p>
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**Domain 2: Compliance, Safety, and Professional Responsibility (19 items)**

Tasks	Knowledge of:
<p>2A. Practice within defined scope of patient care technician/assistant practice.</p>	<p>k65. Scope of practice of the patient care technician/assistant</p>

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<p>2B. Demonstrate empathy, cultural sensitivity and competence, and respect for diversity.</p> <p>2C. Demonstrate professional behavior (e.g., integrity, punctuality, etiquette, respect, professional presentation, setting professional boundaries).</p> <p>2D. Follow procedures for identifying patient.</p> <p>2E. Obtain consent and recognize implied consent.</p> <p>2F. Perform and document environmental safety checks to assess for risks and prevent patient injury and falls.</p> <p>2G. Identify and report abuse or neglect.</p> <p>2H. Prevent workplace injuries by following OSHA guidelines.</p> <p>2I. Report and document work-related accidents.</p> <p>2J. Follow The Joint Commission (TJC) patient safety guidelines.</p> <p>2K. Follow safety procedures when using medical supplies and equipment (e.g., lock hospital bed, lock wheelchair, raise stretcher side rail, apply safety belt and restraint).</p> <p>2L. Adhere to operational standards (e.g., TJC, Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute [CLSI], Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers [HCAHPS], medical codes of ethics).</p> <p>2M. Recognize and respond to emergency situations (e.g., fire, terroristic threat, biological hazard, natural disaster).</p> <p>2N. Adhere to HIPAA regulations regarding protected health information (PHI).</p> <p>2O. Adhere to Patients' Bill of Rights.</p> <p>2P. Follow the chain of command.</p> <p>2Q. Communicate with other health care professionals using electronic health records and appropriate medical terminology.</p>	<p>k66. Medical ethics</p> <p>k67. Cultural, religious, psychosocial, and economic considerations impacting provision of care</p> <p>k68. Professional behavior and etiquette</p> <p>k69. Two patient identifiers (i.e., name and date of birth)</p> <p>k70. Consent (implied and informed)</p> <p>k71. Fall and injury prevention and intervention methods</p> <p>k72. Types of abuse (e.g., sexual, physical, financial, negligence), and indications and methods to identify them</p> <p>k73. Mandated reporting (e.g., medical errors, abuse, communicable diseases)</p> <p>k74. Role of social services in health care</p> <p>k75. Resources and regulations regarding workplace safety (e.g., OSHA, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [NIOSH], Centers for Disease Control [CDC])</p> <p>k76. Operational standards (e.g., TJC, Clinical Laboratory Standards Institute [CLSI])</p> <p>k77. Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers (HCAHPS)</p> <p>k78. Safety Data Sheets (SDS)</p> <p>k79. Emergency and disaster preparedness</p> <p>k80. HIPAA regulations</p> <p>k81. Patients' Bill of Rights</p> <p>k82. Health care setting chain of command</p> <p>k83. Electronic health records</p> <p>k84. Basic medical terminology</p>
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**Domain 3: Infection Control (16 items)**

Tasks	Knowledge of:
<p>3A. Use standard and transmission-based precautions (e.g., isolation, quarantine protocols).</p> <p>3B. Disinfect equipment before and after use.</p> <p>3C. Prepare soiled equipment for sterile processing.</p>	<p>k85. CDC Standard and Transmission-based Precautions (e.g., isolation protocols, hand hygiene)</p>

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<p>3D. Apply and remove personal protective equipment (PPE) as needed to ensure safety of personnel and patients.</p> <p>3E. Dispose of biohazardous materials (e.g., needles, canisters, tubes) according to OSHA standards (e.g., sharps containers, red bags).</p> <p>3F. Follow exposure control plans in the event of occupational exposure.</p> <p>3G. Use aseptic techniques as needed (e.g., wash hands, use sanitizer, don gloves).</p> <p>3H. Use sterile techniques during provision of patient care (e.g., while assisting with PICC dressing change, inserting foley catheter, performing blood cultures).</p> <p>3I. Set up and maintain a sterile field.</p>	<p>k86. Personal protective equipment (PPE) use related to standard precautions (e.g., gloves, gowns, masks, shoe covers)</p> <p>k87. OSHA standards and guidelines</p> <p>k88. Causes and prevention of health care-associated infections</p> <p>k89. Common health care-associated infections (e.g., catheter associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI), methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus [MRSA], Clostridium difficile [C. difficile])</p> <p>k90. Chain of infection</p> <p>k91. Disinfectant dry times (e.g., bleach, alcohol, ammonia chlorides)</p> <p>k92. Procedures to maintain a sterile field</p> <p>k93. Procedures for handling soiled equipment for sterilization purposes</p>
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**Domain 4: Phlebotomy and Nonblood Specimen Collection (12 items)**

Tasks	Knowledge of:
4A. Verify functioning of equipment and collection tubes (e.g., check for sterility, expiration date, manufacturer's defects).	k94. Vascular system as it relates to phlebotomy
4B. Verify that patient has adhered to testing requirements.	k95. Phlebotomy standards (e.g., CLSI, CLIA)
4C. Perform capillary punctures.	k96. Information required on requisition forms (e.g., testing requirements, patient information)
4D. Perform venipunctures (e.g., winged infusion set, evacuated tube system, syringe).	k97. Patient identification guidelines for phlebotomy
4E. Identify and respond to adverse reactions to collection.	k98. Testing requirements (e.g., fasting, medication, basal state)
4F. Avoid preanalytical errors when collecting blood and nonblood specimens.	k99. Equipment for capillary punctures and venipunctures
4G. Handle and transport blood samples.	k100. Tube additives appropriate to testing requirements
4H. Perform blood culture collections.	k101. Order of draw for capillary and venipuncture collections
4I. Explain nonblood specimen collection procedures to patient.	k102. Site selection
4J. Collect nonblood specimens (e.g., stool, urine, semen, sputum).	k103. Considerations in determining venous accessibility (e.g., patient age and condition)
4K. Label specimens at the bedside.	k104. Needle insertion and removal techniques
4L. Handle and transport patient-collected nonblood specimens.	k105. Patient safety considerations for blood collection (e.g., arm rest on chair, wheelchair wheels locked, fall precautions)
4M. Transport specimens based on handling requirements.	k106. Special considerations for venipuncture (e.g., medication review, limb restrictions, stroke)

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<p>4N. Perform point-of-care testing (e.g., rapid strep, urine dipstick, pregnancy, mononucleosis).</p> <p>4O. Adhere to quality control based on CLIA-waived procedures.</p> <p>4P. Adhere to chain of custody guidelines when applicable.</p>	<p>k107. Preanalytical errors when collecting blood specimens (e.g., Quantity Not Sufficient [QNS], hemolysis)</p> <p>k108. Common adverse reactions to blood collection (e.g., syncope, diaphoresis, nausea, seizure)</p> <p>k109. Complications from blood collection (e.g., lack of blood flow, hematoma, petechiae, nerve injury)</p> <p>k110. Specimen labeling techniques and requirements</p> <p>k111. Blood culture collection techniques</p> <p>k112. Nonblood specimen collection techniques (e.g., urine clean catch, sputum collection, stool collection)</p> <p>k113. CDC standards for specimen collection and transportation (e.g., prevention of bloodborne pathogens, exposure control, asepsis)</p> <p>k114. Specimen handling requirements (e.g., temperature, light, time)</p> <p>k115. Point-of-care testing specimens, methods, and processes</p> <p>k116. CLIA-waived procedures and standards</p> <p>k117. Chain of custody guidelines (e.g., forensic studies, blood alcohol, drug screen)</p>
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**Domain 5: EKG (10 items)**

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Knowledge of:</b>
<p>5A. Prepare patient and environment (e.g., patient positioning, skin preparation, remove electromagnetic devices) and apply electrodes.</p> <p>5B. Perform EKG.</p> <p>5C. Identify and respond to signs and symptoms of cardiopulmonary compromise.</p> <p>5D. Identify and resolve artifacts from the tracing (e.g., wandering baseline, somatic, electrical).</p> <p>5E. Recognize and report dysrhythmias.</p> <p>5F. Respond to potentially life-threatening arrhythmias.</p> <p>5G. Apply external cardiac monitor (ambulatory monitor and telemetry).</p> <p>5H. Provide patient education on use of external monitors.</p> <p>5I. Maintain EKG equipment.</p>	<p>k118. Cardiac conduction system</p> <p>k119. Basic functions of an EKG machine</p> <p>k120. Placement of 3-lead, 5-lead, and 12-lead electrodes</p> <p>k121. Patients who have special considerations for EKG (e.g., pediatric patients, amputations, mastectomy)</p> <p>k122. Signs and symptoms of cardiopulmonary compromise</p> <p>k123. Artifact types and resolution techniques</p> <p>k124. Characteristics of waveforms of a cardiac cycle (e.g., P waves, QRS complexes)</p> <p>k125. Life-threatening arrhythmias (e.g., ventricular tachycardia, ventricular fibrillation)</p> <p>k126. EKG equipment maintenance and cleaning requirements</p> <p>k127. Holter monitor</p> <p>k128. Telemetry monitor</p>

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	k129. Reasons for use of varying paper speeds k130. Use and connection of portable EKG machines k131. Considerations for patient on telemetry (e.g., alerts, alarms, functionality)
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