Overview

This study guide is designed to help students prepare for the Dental Assisting assessment. It not only includes information about the assessment, but also the skills standards upon which the assessment is based, resources that can be used to prepare for the assessment and test taking strategies. The assessment measures a student’s ability to apply knowledge of the skills necessary for success in the dental assisting field.

Each of the four sections in this guide provides useful information for students preparing for the Dental Assisting assessment.

- CareerTech and Competency-Based Education: A Winning Combination
- Dental Assisting assessment
  - Assessment Information
  - Standards and Test Content
  - Sample Questions
  - National Certification Exam Crosswalk
  - Abbreviations, Symbols, and Acronyms
- Strategies for Test Taking Success
- Notes

This assessment’s standards are aligned with those of the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB). The DANB’s Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) is administered in three tests: General Chairside Assisting, Radiation Health and Safety and Infection Control. The CTTC assessment covers these three components in one assessment. The DANB was founded in 1948 and is the national certification board for dental assistants. DANB, a nonprofit organization, is a member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE).

ICE: www.credentialingexcellence.org
DANB: www.danb.org

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CareerTech and Competency-Based Education: A Winning Combination

Competency-based education uses learning outcomes that emphasize both the application and creation of knowledge and the mastery of skills critical for success. In a competency-based education system, students advance upon mastery of competencies, which are measurable, transferable outcomes that empower students.

Career and technology education uses industry professionals and certification standards to identify the knowledge and skills needed to master an occupation. This input provides the foundation for development of curriculum, assessments and other instructional materials needed to prepare students for wealth-generating occupations and produce comprehensively trained, highly skilled employees demanded by the work force.

Tools for Success

CareerTech education relies on three basic instructional components to deliver competency-based instruction: skills standards, curriculum materials, and competency assessments.

Skills standards provide the foundation for competency-based instruction and outline the knowledge and skills that must be mastered in order to perform related jobs within an industry. Skills standards are aligned with national skills standards and/or industry certification requirements; therefore, a student trained to the skills standards is equally employable in local, state and national job markets.

Curriculum materials and textbooks contain information and activities that teach students the knowledge and skills outlined in the skills standards. In addition to complementing classroom instruction, curriculum resources include supplemental activities that enhance learning by providing opportunities to apply knowledge and demonstrate skills.

Competency Assessments test the student over material outlined in the skills standards and taught using the curriculum materials and textbooks. When used with classroom performance evaluations, written competency assessments provide a means of measuring occupational readiness.

Each of these components satisfies a unique purpose in competency-based education and reinforces the knowledge and skills students need to gain employment and succeed on the job.

Measuring Success

Evaluation is an important component of competency-based education. Pre-training assessments measure the student’s existing knowledge prior to receiving instruction and ensure the student’s training builds upon this knowledge base. Formative assessments administered throughout the training process provide a means of continuously monitoring the student’s progress towards mastery.

Written competency assessments provide a means of evaluating the student’s mastery of knowledge and skills. Coaching reports communicate competency assessment scores to students and provide a breakdown of assessment results by standard area. The coaching report also shows how well the student has mastered skills needed to perform major job functions and identifies areas of job responsibility that may require additional instruction and/or training.
Dental Assisting Assessment
Assessments Information

What is the Dental Assisting assessment?

The Dental Assisting assessment is an end-of-program assessment for students in dental assisting programs. The assessment provides an indication of student mastery of knowledge and concepts necessary for success in careers in this area.

How were the assessments developed?

The assessment was developed by the CareerTech Testing Center. The assessment and standards align with the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) standards. Items were developed and reviewed by a committee of subject matter experts.

What do the assessments cover?

The test includes multiple-choice test items over the following areas:

**Dental Assisting (100 questions)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collect and Record Clinical Data</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perform Chairside Dental Procedures</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare and Apply Chairside Dental Materials</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perform Laboratory Procedures</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide Patient Education</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevent and Manage Emergencies</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perform Office Operations</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice the Legal Aspects of Dentistry</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote Infection Control</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote Occupational Safety</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote Radiation Health and Safety</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote Professionalism</td>
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</table>

What are the benefits of using this assessment?

Students receive a competency certificate for each assessment that he/she passes. This certificate may be included in his/her portfolio and used to communicate the student’s mastery of the subject matter to potential employers.

When should the assessment be taken?

The CareerTech Testing Center recommends that students take this assessment as soon as possible after receiving all standards-related instruction, rather than waiting until the end of the school year.

Are the assessments timed?

No. However, most students finish the assessment within one hour.
What resources can students use on these assessments?

Students are allowed to use calculators and scratch paper on CTTC competency assessments; however, these items must be provided by the testing proctor and returned to the proctor before the student’s exam is submitted for scoring. Calculator apps on cell phones and other devices may not be used on these assessments.

What accommodations can be made for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)?

Accommodations are allowed for students with an Individualized Education Plan. Examples of allowable accommodations include:

- Extended time — This assessment is not timed; therefore, students may take as much time as needed to finish. The assessment must be completed in one testing session.

- Readers — A reader may be used to read the assessment to a student who has been identified as needing this accommodation.

- Enlarged text — Students needing this accommodation can activate this feature by clicking the icon in the upper right corner of the screen.

What can students expect on Test Day?

All CTTC assessments are web-based and delivered exclusively by a proctor in the school’s assessment center. The proctor cannot be an instructor or anyone who was involved with the student during instruction.

Assessments are delivered in a question-by-question format. When a question is presented, the student can select a response or leave the question unanswered and advance to the next question. Students may also flag questions to revisit before the test is scored. All questions must be answered before the test can be submitted for scoring.

After the assessment is scored, the student will receive a score report that not only shows the student’s score on the assessment, but also how the student performed in each standard area.

Can students retake the test?

Students may retake the test unless their school or state testing policies prohibit retesting. Students who can retest must wait at least three days between test attempts.
Standards and Test Content

Collect and Record Clinical Data (3 questions)

1. Conduct preliminary interview and examination of patient.
   • Interview patient for purpose of patient’s visit and/or chief complaint.
   • Review patient’s medical history and update records.
     › Contraindications
     › Tobacco use
   • Assess patient’s general physical condition and note any abnormalities.
   • Identify and locate the types of teeth in the primary and permanent dentition.
   • Identify, describe and note any abnormal findings in the head and neck regions.
   • Common oral diseases (canker sores, fever blister, etc.)
   • Dental hygiene-related problems

2. Perform charting functions.
   • Record patient information and treatment in progress notes.
   • Identify the permanent and primary teeth according to the Universal Numbering System.
   • Chart conditions in the patient’s oral cavity and accurately record data using standard charting techniques:
     › Observe/record suspected decayed teeth.
     › Record periodontal conditions (mobility, furcation involvement, inflammation, and pocket depth).
   • Record treatment plan.
   • Obtain informed consent.
   • Use common dental software.

3. Use diagnostic aids.
   • Prepare for and assist with the collection of diagnostic data (i.e., radiographs, pulp tests, intraoral and extraoral photographs, occlusal registrations, intraoral camera).
   • Take, pour, and trim impressions for diagnostic study casts.

4. Assess vital signs.
   • Take and record pulse rate and description.
   • Observe and record respiration rate.
   • Measure and record blood pressure.
   • Take and record temperature.
Perform Chairside Dental Procedures (17 questions)

1. Prepare operatory.
   • Prepare the treatment room to receive and treat the patient (includes infection control and barrier techniques).
   • Prepare appropriate treatment trays with instruments in sequence of use and delivery position.
   • Seat and prepare patient; position and adjust equipment.

2. Select and prepare armamentarium.
   • Select and prepare tray set-ups and all necessary instruments for general dentistry and dental emergency procedures.
     ‣ Exams
     ‣ Fillings
     ‣ Crown and bridge
     ‣ Root canal
     ‣ Oral surgery/extractions
     ‣ Dentures/partials
     ‣ Sealants
     ‣ Prophylaxis

3. Perform or assist with intraoral procedures.
   • Demonstrate four-handed dentistry concepts in all treatment procedures.
     ‣ Assume correct positions.
     ‣ Perform instrument transfers.
     ‣ Maintain access and visibility for treatment procedures.
   • Maintain field of operation during dental procedures through the use of retraction, rinsing, suction, irrigation, drying, etc.
   • Place and remove cotton rolls.
   • Apply and/or assist with intraoral procedures.
     ‣ Polish
     ‣ Topical fluoride
     ‣ Vitality test
     ‣ Minor bleeding
     ‣ Temporary and/or excess cement
     ‣ Dental dam
     ‣ Matrix bands
   • Assist with and/or apply topical anesthetic to site of injection.
   • Assist with and/or monitor the administration of nitrous oxide/oxygen analgesia.
   • Indentify and exchange rotary instruments in dental hand pieces.

4. Use patient management techniques.
   • Calm and reassure patient.
   • Display professional attitude with all patients.
   • Accommodate patients with special needs.
   • Monitor patient during procedures.
Prepare and Apply Chairside Dental Materials (9 questions)

1. Prepare for and assist with impressions.
   • Prepare, mix, deliver and store the following materials for impressions:
     • Irreversible hydrocolloid (alginate)
     • Elastomeric (polyether, polyvinylsiloxane)

2. Prepare for and assist with restoratives.
   • Prepare, mix, deliver and store restorative materials including:
     - Amalgam
     - Cements
     - Composites
     - Temporary restorative materials
     - Bases/liners
     - Etchants
     - Bonding agents
   • Prepare and/or seat temporary crowns.

Perform Laboratory Procedures (7 questions)

1. Select and prepare materials.
   • Gypsum products
   • Dental waxes
   • Acrylic products or acrylic substitutes

2. Properly store gypsum and acrylic products and dental waxes.
3. Fabricate and evaluate diagnostic casts, including trimming and finishing.
4. Fabricate bleaching trays and mouth guards.
5. Clean and polish fixed and removable appliances and prostheses.

Provide Patient Education (6 questions)

1. Provide information on personal oral habits that may compromise general health.
2. Provide pre/post treatment instruction.
   • Explain, clarify and provide written instructions on the procedures and services being delivered.
3. Explain plaque control techniques.
   • Evaluate the patient’s oral health care status and habits.
   • Provide preventative oral health care information to the patient based on individual needs.
   • Instruct the patient in appropriate toothbrush selection and brushing techniques.
4. Explain nutrition and its effect on dental health.
   • Provide instruction and evaluate basic nutritional needs of individual patients as they relate to
dental health.
   • Explain to the patient the relationship of carbohydrates to the development of dental caries.
**Prevent and Manage Emergencies (8 questions)**

1. Take actions to prevent medical emergencies based on the patient’s medical history.
2. Recognize and assist with medical emergencies.
   - Recognize the signs and symptoms related to medical conditions/emergencies.
   - Assemble and maintain appropriate emergency supplies, drugs and equipment.
   - Locate and follow office emergency procedures.
3. Describe the dental assistant’s responsibility during dental emergencies.
   - Don’t panic.
   - Notify the dentist and follow instructions.
4. Perform first aid and/or CPR.
   - Use Automated External Defibrillator

**Perform Office Operations (3 questions)**

1. Maintain and control supplies.
   - Record and inventory items used.
   - Order supplies, instruments and equipment to maintain specified levels.
   - Rotate expendable/non-expendable supplies according to the expiration dates and the inventory control system.
   - Perform maintenance on the equipment and instruments as per manufacturers’ instructions.
   - Properly care for and store supplies.
3. Communicate effectively and establish good working relationships with patients and other members of the dental care team.
   - Use good telephone etiquette.
   - Greet and dismiss patients and visitors.
   - Use the appointment control process.
   - Explain fees.
   - Explain basic concepts of third-party payment.
   - Use dental office software.
Practice the Legal Aspects of Dentistry (3 questions)

1. Explain legal responsibilities and regulations.
   • Explain the patient’s right to privacy and confidentiality.
     ‣ HIPAA
   • Explain the legal responsibilities of the dental assistant in relation to the State Dental Practice Act.
     ‣ Scope of practice
2. Maintain records in accordance with legal guidelines.
   • Identify the legal significance of the patient’s chart.
   • Follow procedures necessary to release copies of patient records.
   • File items into individual patient records (i.e., radiographs, histories, correspondence)
   • Record patient telephone communication and professional dental and medical consultations.
   • Document informed consent or refusal of recommended treatment.

Promote Infection Control (11 questions)

1. Maintain and document a quality assurance program for infection control throughout the dental office.
2. Explain the rationale for infection control procedure (Health Care Team/patient).
   • Explain the need for vaccination against infectious diseases.
   • Identify the modes of disease transmission.
   • Prevent cross-contamination and disease transmission.
     ‣ Perform proper hand washing.
     ‣ Use disposable items whenever possible.
     ‣ Protect the patient and operator through the use of barrier techniques including masks, gloves, protective eyewear, clinic attire and other safety items.
     ‣ Properly dispose of biohazardous and other waste.
     ‣ Properly store all instruments.
   • Perform sterilization procedures.
     ‣ Prepare dental instruments and equipment for sterilization.
     ‣ Use the appropriate method of sterilization of dental instruments, equipment and supplies.
   • Perform disinfection procedures.
     ‣ Use the proper method of disinfection for the treatment room, equipment and other appropriate materials.
     ‣ Prepare chemical agents according to manufacturers’ instructions.
Promote Occupational Safety (8 questions)

1. Follow the standard guidelines of occupational safety for dental office personnel.
   - Use chemical agents according to OSHA standards including proper labeling.
   - Maintain and update Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) on all applicable materials.
   - Document and report all exposures.
2. Discuss the necessary steps to follow should an exposure occur.
3. Understand the importance of proper body mechanics.
4. Demonstrate proper body mechanics.
   - Lifting techniques
   - Ergonomics
   - Posture
   - Chair position
   - Patient transfers

Promote Radiation Health and Safety (22 questions)

1. Expose radiographs.
   - Select appropriate radiographic technique.
   - Select appropriate film or imaging device, placement devices, cotton rolls, cassettes, infection control barriers, lead aprons and thyroid collar.
   - Practice infection control techniques.
   - Expose dental films, using various techniques.
     - Intraoral
     - Extraoral
     - Digital
     - Phosphor
     - Sensors
   - Prepare, maintain, and replenish radiographic solutions for manual and automatic processors.
   - Process exposed intra and extraoral radiographs by use of manual, automatic or scanning techniques.
   - Practice infection control techniques.
3. Evaluate radiographs for errors and retake if necessary.
   - Identify anatomical structures and dental materials on radiographs.
   - Label patient information on radiographs.
   - Prepare radiographs for viewing, filing and duplication.
5. Practice safety measures to protect the patient from radiation.
6. Practice safety measures to protect the operator and dental team from radiation.
   • Describe techniques for monitoring individual radiation exposure.

7. Explain proper storage and disposal of supplies.
   • Discuss proper temperature, humidity, radiation protection and inventory control for film storage.
   • Properly store chemical agents used in radiography procedures according to the local regulatory agency, in compliance with the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard.
   • Properly dispose of all chemical agents and other materials.
   • Discuss proper storage and handling of imaging devices.

8. Explain quality assurance guidelines.
   • Implement quality assurance procedure, including daily monitoring of solution temperatures, dates of solution changes, test film runs, etc.

### Promote Professionalism (3 questions)

1. Demonstrate appropriate appearance
   • Attire
   • Hygiene
   • Dental health
   • Personal habits (i.e. smoking)

2. Pursue continuing education opportunities

3. Create a resume

4. Describe requirements for obtaining/maintaining professional designation
   • Certified Dental Assistant
   • Expanded function Dental Assistant

5. Identify advanced training and certification opportunities for dental assistants
   • Coronal polishing/fluoride application
   • Nitrous oxide
   • Radiation safety
   • Sealants

6. Demonstrate employability skills
   • Attendance/observance of work hours
   • Professional communication (grammar)
   • Teamwork
   • Problem solving
   • Critical thinking
Sample Questions

1. Which of the following procedures involves applying a plastic-like coating over the occlusal pits and grooves of the teeth?

   A. dental sealants  
   B. disclosing agent  
   C. fluoride treatment  
   D. prophylaxis

2. When trimming a diagnostic cast on a model trimmer, the dental assistant should:

   A. trim the models in occlusion.  
   B. rotate the model continuously.  
   C. trim the model dry.  
   D. use water in the trimmer.

3. Which of the following containers is used for the disposal of contaminated needles and broken glass?

   A. sharps receptacle  
   B. hazardous waste bag  
   C. infectious waste bag  
   D. trash can

4. If a small mercury spill occurs in the dental office, the assistant should:

   A. call the EPA to report the spill.  
   B. clean up and dispose of the mercury in the trash can.  
   C. make a report and tell the dentist.  
   D. use a spill kit, a mask and utility gloves to clean up the spill.

5. X-ray positioning instruments and bite-blocks that are placed in the patient’s mouth are:

   A. critical items that require heat sterilization.  
   B. non-critical items that can be disinfected and reused.  
   C. semi-critical items that can be disinfected and reused.  
   D. semi-critical items that are disposable or sterilized before reuse.

6. The three types of x-ray film are:

   A. D, E and F.  
   B. intraoral, extraoral and duplicating.  
   C. intraoral, extraoral and panoramic.  
   D. one-, two- and three-film packets.
7. What is the universal sign for choking?
   A. coughing
   B. grasping the throat
   C. quick breaths
   D. exhaling rapidly

8. A positive telephone image is developed by speaking:
   A. in dental terms.
   B. loudly.
   C. softly
   D. in a pleasing voice.

9. Proper body mechanics can:
   A. result in strains.
   B. prevent injuries.
   C. increase back pain.
   D. cause stress.

10. A disinfectant is used to:
    A. destroy most disease-causing microorganisms.
    B. kill all microbes.
    C. destroy most organisms.
    D. kill all macroorganisms.
**Sample Questions — Key**

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A. coughing  Incorrect by definition
B. grasping the throat  Correct by definition
C. quick breaths  Incorrect by definition
D. exhaling rapidly  Incorrect by definition

8. A positive telephone image is developed by speaking:

A. in dental terms.  Incorrect
B. loudly.  Incorrect
C. softly  Incorrect
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A. result in strains.  Incorrect
B. prevent injuries.  Correct
C. increase back pain.  Incorrect
D. cause stress.  Incorrect

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A. destroy most disease-causing microorganisms.  Correct by definition
B. kill all microbes.  Incorrect by definition
C. destroy most organisms.  Incorrect by definition
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# National Certification Exam Crosswalk

The chart below displays items on the CareerTech Testing Center's Dental Assisting assessment, which are crosswalked to the Dental Assisting National Board assessment.

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<th>Dental Assisting National Board</th>
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<td>Use diagnostic aids</td>
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<td>Prepare operatory</td>
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<td>Select and prepare armamentarium</td>
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<td>Perform or assist with intra-oral procedures</td>
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<td>Use patient management techniques</td>
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<td><strong>Prepare and Apply Chairside Dental Materials</strong></td>
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<td>Prepare for and assist with impressions</td>
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<td>Recognize and assist with medical emergencies</td>
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<td><strong>Understand the Legal Aspects of Dentistry</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain and document a quality assurance program for infection control throughout the dental office</td>
<td>ICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss patient and dental health care worker education</td>
<td>ICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow Standard Precautions for the prevention of disease transmission</td>
<td>ICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promote Occupational Safety</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow the standards and guidelines of occupational safety for dental office personnel</td>
<td>ICE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorporate personal safety measures when using toxic materials or irritants</td>
<td>ICE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand the importance of proper body mechanics</td>
<td>ICE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate proper body mechanics</td>
<td>ICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promote Radiation Health and Safety</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expose radiographs</td>
<td>RHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Process radiographs</td>
<td>RHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluate radiographs for errors and retake if necessary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mount radiographs</td>
<td>RHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice safety measures to protect the patient from radiation</td>
<td>RHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice safety measures to protect the operator from radiation</td>
<td>RHS</td>
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</table>
Abbreviations, Symbols and Acronyms

The following is a list of abbreviations, symbols, and acronyms used in the Dental Assistant study guide and on the Dental Assistant assessment.

3D               Three-dimensional
°                Degree
/                Either or
"                Inches
%                Percent
ALARA            As low as reasonably achievable
BMI              Body Mass Index
CAB              Compressions, Airway, Breathing
CDA              Certified Dental Assistant
CPR              Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
CTTC             Career Tech Testing Center
DANB             Dental Assisting National Board
EMT              Emergency Medical Technician
EPA              Environmental Protection Agency
HBV              Hepatitis B Virus
HCV              Hepatitis C Virus
HepB             Hepatitis B
HIPAA            Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
HIV              Human Immune Deficiency Virus
ICE              Institute for Credentialing Excellence
IEP              Individualized Education Plan
kVp              Kilovolts
MSDS             Material Safety Data Sheets
OSHA             Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PPE              Personal Protective Equipment
XCP              Extension Cone Paralleling
X-Ray            X Radiation
Test Taking Strategies

This section of the study guide contains valuable information for testing success and provides a common-sense approach for preparing for and performing well on any test.

General Testing Advice

1. Get a good night’s rest the night before the test – eight hours of sleep is recommended.
2. Avoid junk food and “eat right” several days before the test.
3. Do not drink a lot or eat a large meal prior to testing.
4. Be confident in your knowledge and skills!
5. Relax and try to ignore distractions during the test.
6. Focus on the task at hand – taking the test and doing your best!
7. Listen carefully to the instructions provided by the exam proctor. If the instructions are not clear, ask for clarification.

Testing Tips

1. Read the entire question before attempting to answer it.
2. Try to answer the question before reading the choices. Then, read the choices to determine if one matches, or is similar, to your answer.
3. Do not change your answer unless you misread the question or are certain that your first answer is incorrect.
4. Answer questions you know first, so you can spend additional time on the more difficult questions.
5. Check to make sure you have answered every question before you submit the assessment for scoring — unanswered questions are marked incorrect.