



# NCLEX-RN® QUESTION WALKTHROUGHS: MULTIPLE CHOICE



Multiple choice questions include a stem and four answer choices. Three distractors may seem relevant to the stem, but are not the best choice for the given situation. You must choose the one, most appropriate, answer.

## THE STEM

The stem may be a single sentence or an entire paragraph. It describes the clinical context.



**A client is admitted to the unit with an order for seizure precautions.**

## THE ANSWER CHOICES

**Distractor**

**X** A. Move the client to a room closer to the nurse's station.

**Correct answer**

**✓** B. Maintain the client's bed in the lowest position.

**Distractor**

**X** C. Serve the client's food in paper and plastic containers.

**Distractor**

**X** D. Ensure that soft limb restraints are properly applied to upper extremities.

## THE QUESTION

This section of the stem contains the question you'll need to answer.



**Which action is most appropriate?**

### Clarify the question

Read carefully and be sure you understand what the stem is asking:

**Is the stem positive or negative?**

- **Positive:**  
Select the answer that is true or correct.  
Keywords: appropriate, true, indicated, expected, understands
- **Negative:**  
Select the answer that is false or incorrect.  
Keywords: except, inappropriate, avoid, contraindicated, further education

**Is the stem asking you to prioritize?**

- **Prioritization:**  
Keywords: first, most, best, immediate, primary, next

## Strategies for correctly answering multiple choice questions

### Rephrase the question in your own words

**Example:**

Which measure should the nurse take when caring for a client at risk of seizures?

### Think about possible correct answers before you look at the choices

**Example:**

I know that seizure precautions include fall prevention and keeping suction and oxygen available at the bedside.

### Eliminate distractors

- **Repetition:** answers that say the same thing in different words can usually be eliminated
- **Absolutes:** answer choices that use words like always, never, only, and all, are often wrong
- **Wrong question:** distractors may contain correct information about the topic, but fail to answer the question posed in the stem
- **Delaying or deferring:** answer choices that delay action or defer responsibility to others are often wrong
- **Not by the book:** an accepted shortcut is never the right answer: assume you have unlimited time, resources, and staff, and choose the text-book answer
- **Restraints are a last resort:** unless the stem makes clear that all other options have been exhausted, restraints are rarely the right answer

## TIPS FOR PRIORITIZING

**SAFETY is always first!**

Remember the nursing process:

- Assessment
- Diagnosis
- Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation