

CPEN... What Is It? How Do I Pass It?

"Certified Pediatric Emergency Nurse Exam Secrets"



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What is CPEN?

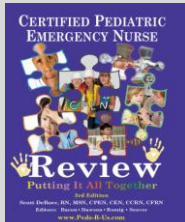
The Certified Pediatric Emergency Nurse (CPEN) exam began in 2009 for those such as myself who prefer, when given the choice, to care for little people. "Earning your CPEN credential demonstrates that you have extensive experience, knowledge and abilities related to pediatric emergency nursing care beyond basic licensure." (pncb.org) So with that in mind, here's some suggestions for passing CPEN.



1. Get a CPEN review book

There are now multiple CPEN review books out there, but only two that I actually recommend. My CPEN review book. Yes I'm biased, but the 3rd Edition really is a great review of pediatric medical & traumatic emergencies. It consists of over 1,000 multiple choice questions, but more importantly, each also has a short rationale as to why "x" answer is correct, incorrect, etc.

- My CPEN Book Available:**
- Hard Copy (Amazon.com)**
- E-Book (Barnes & Noble)**
- Audio Book - (iTunes and Audible)**



Lots of illustrations by my teen daughter add to the relaxed feel of the book. It's written like you are attending one of my presentations, I'm asking you questions... then sitting down discussing the answers with you. It's divided into chapters by body system. That way, if you stink at endocrine and rock at peds cardiac, review the endocrine chapter and skim over the cardiac questions. We regularly receive (AND truly love) emails from people who passed the test just after reading my book. Again, I'm admittedly biased, but the book works, especially when combined with the other review options listed. The Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) published their CPEN review book a few years ago as well. (www.ena.org)

It's actually very well written and I like the fact that the questions are written in the same format/style as the test questions. The rationales are good and certainly medically correct. It just reads more like a Q&A textbook and lacks my daughter's bonus illustrations (and a sense of humor).

2. ENA's Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course (ENPC) book:

This is crucial. Many have indicated they saw lots of questions that look like they cut/pasted the info from the book onto the test. I highly recommend you buy or borrow an ENPC book and review it prior to taking the test. Especially the sections on triage and pain management. Triage: According to the book (not necessarily what you do every day...), which of these four patients would you see first? According to the book... what ESI triage acuity (on the I-V scale) would you make this patient? Pain management: Where do you give an IM injection to a kid (specifically into which muscle?) Which of the zillion pain scales out there does ENPC actually describe in the book? Which pain scale works for which type of patient?

Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS):

If you are working with sick kids in the ED, you most likely are PALS certified. However, when was the last time you really reviewed the PALS guidelines for basic CPR compression/ventilations? Heimlich indications and techniques for infants vs. older children? Again, like ENPC, buy or borrow the book. It looks really bad to miss basic PALS questions on the test.

3. Review courses

I personally love teaching CPEN review classes. Especially as most nurses who attend are very experienced in pediatric emergency care (they are taking the CPEN exam after all!) It's a great, very fast paced review of all things pediatric emergency, coupled with lots of test taking tips. Either live or on DVD... when paired with the other suggestions, review courses help to put all the pieces together.

So in summary, if you want to greatly increase your chances of passing CPEN...

- 1) Get a CPEN review book**
- 2) Review PALS and ENPC**
- 3) Take a review course**

The people I've met who didn't pass the first time were most commonly those who didn't study because they worked in big and busy pediatric ER's. However, what "the book" says the correct answer is and what you do every day at your ER can be very different. The test is not cheap. So prepare to pass and proudly become a CPEN.

Go to Peds-R-Us.com for a list of upcoming CPEN Review classes near you and/or order a CPEN book today!

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