



Dental Hygiene NBDHE

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Practice Questions

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1. In a healthy adult, what is the typical depth of the gingival sulcus measured with a periodontal probe?

- A. 4 to 5 millimeters
- B. 1 to 3 millimeters
- C. 6 to 7 millimeters
- D. 8 to 10 millimeters

2. In the Universal Numbering System, which tooth is designated number 8?

- A. Mandibular left central incisor
- B. Maxillary left central incisor
- C. Maxillary right central incisor
- D. Maxillary right first molar

3. X-rays are produced at which component of the dental x-ray tube?

- A. The anode target (tungsten)
- B. The cathode filament
- C. The collimator
- D. The aluminum filter

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4. Lidocaine and articaine belong to which chemical class of local anesthetics?

- A. Esters
- B. Opioids
- C. Barbiturates
- D. Amides



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5. Dental amalgam is an alloy formed primarily by combining silver-tin-copper alloy particles with which metal?

- A. Gold
- B. Aluminum
- C. Lead
- D. Mercury

6. The U.S. Public Health Service recommended optimal fluoride concentration for community water (updated in 2015) is:

- A. 1.5 mg/L
- B. 0.7 mg/L (ppm)
- C. 2.5 mg/L
- D. 4.0 mg/L

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7. Which bacterium is most strongly implicated in the initiation of dental caries?

- A. Tannerella forsythia
- B. Porphyromonas gingivalis
- C. Treponema denticola
- D. Streptococcus mutans

8. The normal resting adult heart rate range is approximately:

- A. 60 to 100 beats per minute
- B. 20 to 40 beats per minute
- C. 100 to 140 beats per minute
- D. 140 to 180 beats per minute

9. Which group of periodontal ligament fibers chiefly resists vertical (intrusive) occlusal forces by suspending the tooth in its socket?

- A. Alveolar crest fibers
- B. Horizontal fibers
- C. Oblique fibers
- D. Interradicular fibers

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10. In the Universal Numbering System, the mandibular left third molar is which number?

- A. 16
- B. 17
- C. 32
- D. 1

11. Increasing the kilovoltage peak (kVp) of a dental x-ray machine primarily affects the beam by:

- A. Increasing the number of photons only
- B. Increasing the energy/penetrating power and producing longer gray scale contrast
- C. Decreasing exposure time automatically
- D. Changing the focal spot size

12. Epinephrine is added to local anesthetic solutions primarily to:

- A. Prolong anesthesia and reduce systemic absorption by causing local vasoconstriction
- B. Speed metabolism of the drug
- C. Increase the pH of the solution
- D. Provide an antihistamine effect

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13. The matrix (continuous phase) of a resin composite restorative is most commonly based on:

- A. Zinc phosphate
- B. Gutta-percha
- C. Gypsum
- D. Bis-GMA or UDMA resin

14. Community water fluoridation is widely regarded as a public health success primarily because it:

- A. Reduces caries across a population regardless of income or access to care
- B. Eliminates the need for brushing
- C. Whitens teeth
- D. Replaces sealant programs



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15. Lactobacillus species are most associated with which stage of the caries process?

- A. Initial enamel attachment
- B. Progression of an established lesion in the dentin
- C. Periodontal bone loss
- D. Salivary buffering

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16. According to current ACC/AHA categories, a blood pressure reading of 130/82 mm Hg is classified as:

- A. Normal
- B. Elevated
- C. Stage 2 hypertension
- D. Stage 1 hypertension

17. Under the 2017 AAP/EFP classification, a patient with 5 mm clinical attachment loss, probing depths of 6 mm, and bone loss extending to the middle third of the root is best staged as which periodontitis stage?

- A. Stage I
- B. Stage II
- C. Stage IV
- D. Stage III

18. What is the hardest and most highly mineralized tissue in the human body?

- A. Dentin
- B. Enamel
- C. Cementum
- D. Cortical bone

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19. Milliamperage (mA) on a dental x-ray unit controls primarily the:

- A. Penetrating power of the beam
- B. Contrast scale length
- C. Wavelength of the photons
- D. Quantity (number) of x-ray photons produced



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20. A cartridge of 2 percent lidocaine contains how many milligrams of lidocaine per 1.8 mL cartridge?

- A. 18 mg
- B. 36 mg
- C. 72 mg
- D. 3.6 mg

21. Light-cured composite resin is polymerized by a curing light that activates which component?

- A. The acid etchant
- B. The filler particles
- C. The bonding silane only
- D. A camphorquinone photoinitiator

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22. The DMFT index measures which of the following?

- A. Decayed, missing, and filled permanent teeth (caries experience)
- B. Plaque accumulation
- C. Gingival bleeding
- D. Periodontal pocket depth

23. Which method is the gold standard for sterilizing heat-stable dental instruments?

- A. Wiping with alcohol
- B. Ultraviolet light alone
- C. Soaking in soapy water
- D. Steam under pressure (autoclave)

24. A blood pressure of 118/76 mm Hg is best classified as:

- A. Stage 1 hypertension
- B. Elevated
- C. Normal
- D. Hypertensive crisis

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25. Subgingival calculus most commonly appears which color when detected clinically?

- A. Chalky white
- B. Bright yellow
- C. Dark brown or black
- D. Translucent

26. Which cells produce dentin and line the outer wall of the dental pulp?

- A. Ameloblasts
- B. Odontoblasts
- C. Cementoblasts
- D. Osteoblasts

27. The radiation protection principle ALARA stands for:

- A. Always Lower Anode Radiation Amount
- B. Automatic Low-Angle Receptor Adjustment
- C. Annual Limit of Acceptable Radiation Acquisition
- D. As Low As Reasonably Achievable

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28. If a 1:100,000 epinephrine concentration contains 0.01 mg/mL, how much epinephrine is in one 1.8 mL cartridge?

- A. 0.018 mg
- B. 0.18 mg
- C. 0.0018 mg
- D. 1.8 mg

29. Acid etching of enamel with phosphoric acid before bonding creates:

- A. A smooth glazed surface
- B. A microscopically roughened surface for micromechanical retention
- C. A fluoride-rich layer
- D. A radiopaque coating



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30. Which index is used to assess oral hygiene by scoring debris and calculus on selected tooth surfaces?

- A. DMFT
- B. CPITN
- C. Simplified Oral Hygiene Index (OHI-S)
- D. Decayed surface index



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Answer Key & Explanations

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1. B — 1 to 3 millimeters

A clinically healthy sulcus measures roughly 1 to 3 mm. Readings of 4 mm or more usually indicate attachment loss or a pseudopocket and warrant further evaluation.

2. C — Maxillary right central incisor

Universal numbering runs 1 to 16 across the maxillary arch starting at the upper right third molar (1), making the maxillary right central incisor number 8.

3. A — The anode target (tungsten)

High-speed electrons from the heated cathode strike the tungsten target of the anode, where their kinetic energy converts to x-ray photons (and heat).

4. D — Amides

Lidocaine, articaine, mepivacaine, and prilocaine are amide local anesthetics (note the '-caine' preceded by an 'i'); procaine and benzocaine are esters.

5. D — Mercury

Amalgam is produced by mixing (tritulating) the powdered alloy with liquid mercury, which wets the particles and forms a workable, hardening mass.

6. B — 0.7 mg/L (ppm)

Since 2015 the recommended optimal level is a single value of 0.7 ppm, balancing caries prevention with reduced risk of dental fluorosis.

7. D — Streptococcus mutans

Streptococcus mutans is the principal initiator of caries because it produces acid from sugars and synthesizes adhesive glucans that build cariogenic biofilm.

8. A — 60 to 100 beats per minute

A normal resting adult pulse is 60 to 100 beats per minute; rates below 60 are bradycardia and above 100 are tachycardia.

9. C — Oblique fibers

Oblique fibers are the most numerous PDL group and run coronally from bone to apically on the cementum, resisting masticatory forces that tend to push the tooth into its socket.

10. B — 17

Numbering continues onto the mandibular arch: tooth 17 is the lower left third molar, and 32 is the lower right third molar.

11. B — Increasing the energy/penetrating power and producing longer gray scale contrast

Higher kVp raises photon energy and penetration, producing an image with longer gray-scale (lower) contrast; mA and time govern the quantity of photons.



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12. A — Prolong anesthesia and reduce systemic absorption by causing local vasoconstriction

Epinephrine constricts local vessels, slowing systemic uptake, prolonging the anesthetic's duration, and reducing bleeding at the site.

13. D — Bis-GMA or UDMA resin

Resin composites use a dimethacrylate organic matrix such as Bis-GMA or UDMA, reinforced with inorganic filler particles for strength and wear resistance.

14. A — Reduces caries across a population regardless of income or access to care

Fluoridation provides a population-wide, equitable caries-prevention benefit that reaches people independent of their access to dental care.

15. B — Progression of an established lesion in the dentin

Lactobacilli are acidogenic and aciduric and are linked to the progression of caries within established cavitated and dentinal lesions rather than initiation.

16. D — Stage 1 hypertension

Under the 2017 ACC/AHA guideline, systolic 130 to 139 or diastolic 80 to 89 mm Hg is Stage 1 hypertension; 130/82 meets the diastolic criterion.

17. D — Stage III

Interdental CAL of 5 mm or more and radiographic bone loss reaching the mid-third of the root place the case in Stage III, which also carries potential for tooth loss without intervention.

18. B — Enamel

Mature enamel is about 96 percent inorganic hydroxyapatite by weight, making it the hardest tissue; however, it is acellular and cannot regenerate.

19. D — Quantity (number) of x-ray photons produced

mA regulates the quantity of electrons available, and therefore the number of x-ray photons (density of the image); kVp governs photon energy.

20. B — 36 mg

A 2 percent solution is 20 mg/mL; 20 mg/mL multiplied by 1.8 mL equals 36 mg of lidocaine per cartridge.

21. D — A camphorquinone photoinitiator

Camphorquinone is the photoinitiator that absorbs blue light (about 468 nm) and starts the free-radical polymerization of the resin matrix.

22. A — Decayed, missing, and filled permanent teeth (caries experience)

DMFT counts Decayed, Missing (due to caries), and Filled permanent Teeth, summarizing an individual's or population's lifetime caries experience.

23. D — Steam under pressure (autoclave)

Steam sterilization in an autoclave (typically 121 C at 15 psi) reliably kills all microbes and spores and is the standard for heat-stable instruments.

24. C — Normal

Under the 2017 ACC/AHA guideline, normal blood pressure is systolic below 120 and diastolic below 80 mm Hg, which 118/76 satisfies.



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25. C — Dark brown or black

Subgingival calculus is darkened (brown to black) by blood pigments from inflamed pocket tissue, in contrast to the white-to-yellow supragingival calculus.

26. B — Odontoblasts

Odontoblasts form dentin and remain at the pulp-dentin border throughout life, with their processes extending into the dentinal tubules.

27. D — As Low As Reasonably Achievable

ALARA directs operators to keep patient and occupational dose As Low As Reasonably Achievable through proper technique, collimation, filtration, and fast receptors.

28. A — 0.018 mg

1:100,000 equals 0.01 mg/mL; multiplied by 1.8 mL gives 0.018 mg of epinephrine per cartridge, important when calculating cardiac dose limits.

29. B — A microscopically roughened surface for micromechanical retention

Phosphoric acid (about 35 to 37 percent) etches enamel to a frosty, microporous surface, allowing resin tags to flow in and lock mechanically.

30. C — Simplified Oral Hygiene Index (OHI-S)

The Simplified Oral Hygiene Index (OHI-S) combines debris and calculus scores on six selected surfaces to gauge oral cleanliness.



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