InstantCert
ESTABLISHED IN 2002

Free Substance Abuse DSST Practice Test

10 questions from InstantCert's 370-card Substance Abuse study guide

How to use this PDF

Each of these questions has one blank and four choices. Nine are a sentence to complete, and question 4 is a question that ends in a blank. Pick the best answer, mark it, and keep going. The answer key with explanations starts after question 10, so do all 10 before you look. No timer. On the real exam you get 72 seconds per question, so if you want a challenge, give yourself 12 minutes for the set. One caveat before you start: this set has one question from each of 10 categories, so it does not follow the real weights. Tobacco and Nicotine is 10% of the real exam and gets one question here, and there is nothing on Cannabinoids, Inhalants, Other Drugs of Abuse, or Antipsychotic Drugs.

What your score means

0 to 4 correct

A score in this range usually means the drug classes are not there yet. Ten questions is a sample, not a diagnosis. Read the explanations all the way through, then take Round 2 on the page linked at the end before you decide how much work is ahead of you.

5 to 7 correct

Right in the middle. Close enough to the line to be worth studying for, and not close enough to walk in cold on an exam where the FY25 DSST pass rate is 50%. Take Round 2 and see if the number holds.

8 to 10 correct

You know the drug classes in this set. Keep in mind that ten questions with no clock is a sample, that the real exam is 100 questions at 72 seconds each, and that this set gives Tobacco and Nicotine, 10% of the real exam, a single question and skips vaping, DSM-5 diagnosis, caffeine, and club drugs. Take Round 2, then read the explanation on anything you missed.

Questions

QUESTION 1 OF 10 | OVERVIEW OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND DEPENDENCE

The three types of drug users include: experimenters, compulsive users and _____.

A. addicts
B. floaters
C. tweakers
D. junkies

QUESTION 2 OF 10 | CLASSIFICATION OF DRUGS

A drug is categorized as Schedule _____ if it has a low potential for abuse, a currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States, and its abuse may lead to limited physical or psychological dependence.

A. II
B. III
C. IV
D. V

QUESTION 3 OF 10 | PHARMACOLOGICAL AND NEUROPHYSIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

All reinforcing drugs (drugs that reinforce their use) stimulate dopamine neurons in the _____ system.

A. mesolimbic
B. neocortical
C. prefrontal
D. hippocampal

QUESTION 4 OF 10 | ALCOHOL

If all of the following consumed the same amount of alcohol at the same speed, which one would have the highest BAC? (120 pound woman, 135 pound woman, 150 pound man, 170 pound man). _____

A. 135 pound woman
B. 150 pound man
C. 120 pound woman
D. 170 pound man

QUESTION 5 OF 10 | ANTI-ANXIETY, SEDATIVES, AND HYPNOTICS

Withdrawal symptoms are more likely to develop with drugs that _____ the system quickly.

A. damage
B. leave
C. shutdown
D. enter

QUESTION 6 OF 10 | TOBACCO AND NICOTINE

Some smokers believe that _____ cigarettes are safer than tobacco cigarettes.

A. menthol
B. herbal
C. electronic
D. clove

QUESTION 7 OF 10 | PSYCHOMOTOR STIMULANTS

Cocaine is absorbed most quickly through smoking and _____.

A. intravenous injection
B. ocular route
C. transdermal route
D. rectal suppository

QUESTION 8 OF 10 | OPIOIDS

Opioid overdose can be diagnosed on the basis of the opioid triad: coma, depressed respiration, and _____ pupils.

A. different sized
B. red
C. pinpoint
D. dilated

QUESTION 9 OF 10 | HALLUCINOGENS

_____ was originally used as a surgical anesthetic and has hallucinogenic effects different from LSD and mescaline (peyote cactus).

A. MDMA
B. PCP
C. GHB
D. DXM

QUESTION 10 OF 10 | ANTIDEPRESSANTS AND MOOD STABILIZERS

After a patient receives their first dose of _____ it takes at least 10 days to see results.

A. lithium
B. naloxone
C. disulfiram
D. methadone

Answer Key

1. B floaters

Floaters (chippers) usually don't maintain their own supply of drugs but prefer to use other's drugs. Experimenters primarily restrict drug usage to recreational settings and are motivated by peer pressure and curiosity. Compulsive users are preoccupied with drug use, talk about drugs constantly and devote lots of time and energy to getting high.

2. D V

Schedule IV drugs have a slightly higher chance of abuse than the Schedule V drugs. What most specifically distinguishes Schedule V drugs from the other schedules is that the drugs are regulated but don't require a prescription.

3. A mesolimbic

The mesolimbic system is suggested to be the primary component responsible for the "reward" properties of electrical stimulation of the midbrain or limbic system. According to this theory, drugs lead to dependence because they stimulate this reward system.

4. C 120 pound woman

Given the same amount of alcohol, the lower your weight, the higher your Blood Alcohol Concentration. Also, given a man and a woman of equal weight, the woman would generally have a higher BAC.

5. B leave

Physical dependence happens when the drug leaves the system more rapidly than the body can adapt. As a result, drug detoxification often relies upon substitution, where a longer acting drug is used to offset the withdrawal symptoms associated with a shorter acting depressant.

6. D clove

The aroma of clove cigarettes hides the negative physical effects of nicotine. In reality, the organic chemical eugenol that gives clove its unique taste deadens the back of the throat and allows deeper inhalation. Clove cigarettes contain 60% more tobacco as well as more tar and nicotine than regular cigarettes.

7. A intravenous injection

The faster the drug is absorbed, the greater the concentration and "high" one feels from cocaine. Oral ingestion can be compared to intranasal administration (snorting) in that it is absorbed much more slowly than smoking or IV injection.

8. C pinpoint

Cause of death with opioid overdose is usually suppressed breathing. Respiratory depression can easily follow an excessive dose of opioids because they depress the respiratory centers in the brain, so that respiration slows and becomes shallow.

9. B PCP

With PCP, few users report visual hallucinations; most report body image changes. Additionally, PCP use has been associated with violent psychotic behavior.

10. A lithium

Lithium is an effective antidepressant when used to treat patients with bipolar disorder--it prevents mood swings. It is used to treat both manic and depressed episodes of bipolar disorder but it takes 10 to 15 days after the first dose is given before any change in symptoms is seen.

Want 10 more? Take Round 2 online

Round 2 is 10 more questions from the same 370 cards, one from each of 10 categories. It covers who named the four types of drug use, the most dangerous form of alcohol withdrawal, the chemical in glues and paint thinners, what cocaine withdrawal usually lacks, a drug that blocks the effects of heroin, what marijuana does to the body, and the most serious side effect of long-term antipsychotic treatment. Take Round 1 on the page below, enter your email on the score screen, and the Round 2 link follows.

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The full Substance Abuse study guide

370 Substance Abuse flashcards, each one with an explanation of why the answer is right, plus 3 full-length timed mock exams in software built to feel like the real DSST screen, plus the Specific Exam Feedback forum on DegreeForum.net, where members post what was on their exam. $20/month, cancel anytime. 30-day money-back guarantee. 96% of InstantCert students who reported a Substance Abuse DSST score passed (1,231 of 1,285, self-reported). The FY25 DSST pass rate for this exam is 50%.

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