

Examples of Inappropriate Item Formats

Generalized items without a clinical scenario

Inappropriate format

Which of the following is correct regarding Hirschsprung disease?

- A. it is associated with hypokalemia
- B. it is associated with postoperative and structure
- C. it is caused by congenital absence of the myenteric parasympathetic nerve ganglia of the distal colon
- D. it is caused by partial mechanical obstruction of the lower colon, rectum or anus
- E. meconium ileus is usually present

Answer: C

Appropriate format

A 1-week-old infant is brought to the office by his mother, who states that the child has not had a bowel movement for the past three days. He has been breast feeding normally; however, she has noticed that his abdomen is swelling. Physical examination reveals the child to be afebrile, with a firm, distended abdomen and diminished bowel sounds. Rectal examination reveals absence of feces. The most likely diagnosis is

- A. enzyme deficiency
- B. Hirschsprung disease
- C. hypothyroidism
- D. imperforate anus
- E. pyloric stenosis

Answer: B

Teaching in the item

Inappropriate format

Universal precautions should be utilized by all medical personnel during the resuscitation of patients. A number of devices are utilized to protect individuals from contracting diseases while providing this vital medical care. The most protective piece of equipment to prevent the spread of disease is

- A. booties
- B. face mask
- C. gloves
- D. goggles
- E. gown

Answer: C

Appropriate format

A 5-year-old male presents to the emergency department in acute respiratory distress. You advise your staff to prepare for a possible emergent intubation. The most protective piece of equipment your staff should use to prevent the spread of communicable disease is

- A. booties
- B. face mask
- C. gloves
- D. goggles
- E. gown

Answer: C

Negative phrasing (“except”, “least” or “not”)

A 15-year-old female presents to the emergency department with right eye pain and nausea. The patient noticed the pain earlier that day in a theater. She also states that her vision is blurred, with halos seen around lights. Physical examination reveals a diffusely reddened and matted right eye with reduced visual acuity. The cornea is hazy and the pupil is mid-dilated and fixed to light. Intraocular pressure is 50 mmHg.

Inappropriate format

All of the following symptoms would be diagnostic of acute-closure glaucoma in this patient **EXCEPT**:

- A. brow pain
- B. constricted pupil
- C. corneal edema
- D. increased intraocular pressure
- E. occasional gastrointestinal symptoms

Answer: B

Appropriate format

The most likely diagnosis is

- A. acute angle-closure glaucoma
- B. acute iritis
- C. central retinal artery occlusion
- D. central retinal vein occlusion
- E. retrobulbar neuritis

Answer: A

Interrelated distracters (“all of the above”, “none of the above” and “both A and B”)

A 5-year-old male presents to the office with progressive photophobia, blurred vision and pain in the right eye over the last six hours. The patient denies any trauma to the eye or previous eye problems. Physical examination reveals a reddened and painful eye with the pupil constricted and direct and consensual photophobia apparent on penlight examination. There is evidence of the ciliary flush and a diffuse reddening of the sclera at the limbus. Visual acuity and intraocular pressure are decreased in the affected eye.

Inappropriate format

This patient’s symptoms are most suggestive of

- A. corneal ulcer
- B. iritis
- C. keratitis
- D. both A and B
- E. all of the above

Answer: E

Appropriate format

This patient’s symptoms are most suggestive of

- A. conjunctivitis
- B. detached retina
- C. hyphema
- D. iritis
- E. ruptured lens

Answer: D