



**AYURVEDIC HEALTH COUNSELOR
CERTIFICATION EXAM
STUDY GUIDE**

2021 Edition

Your participation in the NAMACB certification exam for Ayurvedic Health Counselors is integral to your growth as a member of an emerging healthcare profession in the U.S. As the crux of the first well-established credentialing process for Ayurvedic medicine in the United States, the NAMACB exam offers an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to meet the rigorous educational and professional standards developed by the National Ayurvedic Medical Association (NAMA). Your efforts to achieve this level of excellence represent an important investment in your future and the future of the profession as a whole.

The following study guide will help you prepare for the NAMACB Ayurvedic Health Counselor exam.

Information about the Ayurvedic Health Counselor Exam:

- The exam has five sections, outlined here:
 - Foundations of Ayurveda
 - Concepts of Ayurveda
 - Assessment and Diagnosis
 - Recommendations, Treatment, and Other Interventions
 - Categories of Cikitsa
- The exam consists of 88 multiple-choice questions.
- ***The exam contains Sanskrit terminology. You may use our AHC Resource Guide as a reference to familiarize yourself with Sanskrit terms that may be on the exam.***
 - This study guide includes 15 sample questions.
- You will have 150 minutes to complete the exam.
- The AHC exam costs \$375 USD.
- The exam is pass/fail.
- There are two versions of the exam you may choose from:
 - On-Site Proctored (OSP)
 - Online Proctored (OLP)

- Please register for the AHC exam [here](#).
- You will receive your results for the exam within three weeks of taking it.
- For more information, please contact namacb@ayurvedanama.org.

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FOUNDATIONS OF ĀYURVEDA Section I

Section Objectives:

1. Define Āyurveda and describe its scope.
2. Identify the branches of Āyurveda.
3. Identify the main events in the history of Ayurveda and the main topics in the Bṛhat Trayi
4. Identify the 24 entities mentioned in Sāṃkhya philosophy.

Sample Questions:

Question 1:

What are two of the branches of Āyurveda? (Choose two.)

- A. Surgery
- B. Herbology
- C. Rejuvenation
- D. Bones and Joints

Question 2:

What does the term panca karmendriya mean?

- A. Five sense organs
- B. Five gross elements
- C. Five subtle elements
- D. Five organs of action

CONCEPTS OF ĀYURVEDA Section II

Section Objectives:

1. Identify the 20 opposing qualities (gurvādi guṇas) in the prakṛti and vikṛti and their role and influence.
2. Given a clinical scenario of a client including the client's disease, identify the guṇas that are involved.
3. Given a clinical scenario, identify the information that is most effectively gained from the eightfold diagnostic method (aṣṭavidha parīkṣā).
4. Given a clinical scenario, identify the information that is most effectively gained from the tenfold diagnostic method (daśavidha parīkṣā).
5. Given a clinical scenario that includes information about the state of the doṣas and sub-doṣas, dhātus, upadhātus, and srotas involved in the client's condition, interpret the information in terms of the client's current patterns of digestion, elimination, and sleep as well as the client's stress, energy, and emotional levels?
6. Identify the doṣas, sub-doṣas, dhātus, upadhātus, and srotas.
7. Given a clinical scenario describing the client's physical state upon intake, identify the most effective questions to ask to determine the state of the client's agni.
8. Given a clinical scenario describing the client's physical state, identify the most effective questions to ask to obtain relevant information about the client's appetite, digestion, and elimination pattern for vata vitiation, pitta vitiation, and kapha vitiation.
9. Given a clinical scenario including signs and symptoms of āma in a client, identify if the signs and symptoms contain āma.

10. Given a clinical scenario (may include pictures) including information obtained through observation of the client's tongue, stools, and body odor, interpret the information in the scenario as it relates to āma.
11. Identify the signs and symptoms of normal and vitiated mala.
12. Given a clinical scenario involving urination and sweat patterns that includes information obtained through questioning and/or observing the patient, identify the doshic influences on the patient's condition.
13. Define prāṇa, tejas, and ojas and identify their functions
14. Describe how to assess the state of prāṇa, tejas, and ojas through observation, touch, and the interview process.

Sample Questions:

Question 1:

A 40-year-old female client has just experienced a very stressful divorce. The client presents with irritability, chronic diarrhea, low energy, poor sleep, no appetite, and weight loss.

Which doshic state is affecting this client?

- A. Pitta is low.
- B. Kapha is elevated.
- C. Vata is aggravated.
- D. Udana vata is high.

Question 2:

What is a sign of normal mala?

- A. Dark yellow mūtra (urine)
- B. Dark brown purīṣa (feces)
- C. Light brown purīṣa (feces)
- D. Fleshy-smelling sveda (sweat)

ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS

Section III

Section Objectives:

1. Given a clinical scenario, identify questions to ask to gather the information needed to understand the prakṛti and vikṛti of the client.

2. Identify the circumstances when a counselor should refer a client out, when the counselor can treat the client, and when the counselor should be part of the co-management team.
3. Identify the types of clinical information that are best obtained by taking a family history.
4. Given a clinical scenario including a client's blood pressure (raktacāpa), determine the course of action the counselor should take.
5. Given a portion of a case history of a client, interpret the information to determine factors causing the general doṣhic imbalance and the disease, if any, affecting the client.
6. Given a clinical scenario that includes information about a client derived from observation (darśana), touch (sparśana), and questioning (praśna), determine the stage of pathology that the client is experiencing.
7. Identify the six stages of disease (by their Sanskrit names).
8. Given a clinical scenario, describe how to measure the client's compliance with counselor's recommendations.

Sample Questions:

Question 1:

A 60-year-old post-menopausal client is complaining of hot flashes and irritability. The health counselor needs to determine whether the client's pitta vikrti is related to her post-menopausal status or caused by an underlying imbalance or disease. Which question should the health counselor ask to determine this information?

- A. Do you meditate?
- B. Do you have anxiety?
- C. Did you have an early onset of menses?
- D. Did your hot flashes appear before menopause?

Question 2:

A 60-year-old female client presents for knee pain, constipation, and bloating. The client's blood pressure is 140/86. Which two courses of action should be recommended to the client? (Choose two.)

- A. Eat raw foods
- B. Start triphala
- C. Begin pranayama
- D. Take brisk walks
- E. Visit an emergency room

Question 3:

Which stage of the six stages of disease is characterized by mild digestive disturbance?

- A. Overflow (prasara)
- B. Manifestation (vyakti)
- C. Accumulation (sañcaya)
- D. Relocation (sthana samshray)

RECOMMENDATIONS, TREATMENT, AND OTHER INTERVENTIONS

Section IV

Section Objectives:

Dietary:

1. Identify scenarios in which fasting is appropriate.
2. Given a clinical scenario including information about the client's prakṛti, vikṛti, agni, and symptoms of āma, identify specific foods and spices the client should and should not eat and rituals the client should observe.
3. Given a clinical scenario including information about the client's prakṛti, vikṛti, agni, and symptoms of āma, describe how to properly prepare food and meals.
4. Given a clinical scenario including information about the client's prakṛti, vikṛti, agni and symptoms of āma, identify how to adapt the client's diet based on the season of the year and the client's age and geographic location.
5. Define rasa, virya, vipak, and prabhav.
6. Identify incompatible food combinations.
7. Given a clinical scenario involving tonification (br̥mhāṇa), identify the dietary therapies that should be recommended.

Environmental:

8. Given a clinical scenario including information on the season the year and the client's geographic location, prakṛti, and vikṛti, determine the times the client should rest, how long the client should rest, the time the client should get up, and the time the client should go to bed.
9. Given a clinical scenario including information about the season of the year and the client's geographic location, prakṛti, and vikṛti, determine how many meals the client should eat and the times of day when they should be eaten, when different liquids should be consumed, and when the client should exercise.
10. Given a clinical scenario including information about the season of the year, and the client's geographic location, prakṛti, and vikṛti, determine the daily hygiene practices that the client should adopt and when and how often each practice should be carried out.
11. Identify adjustments that should be made to a daily routine based on the season of the year and the client's geographical location.

Lifestyle:

12. Given a clinical scenario that involves a client who is making lifestyle changes and that includes details about the client's current lifestyle, determine how to support the client in making the desired changes, any additional changes that should be made, and how to support the client who is unsuccessful in making the changes.

13. Given a clinical scenario involving a client with a personal, relationship, or workplace problem, identify how the client can mitigate that problem by observing yama and niyama.
14. Identify the principles of encouraging spiritual awareness throughout the day.
15. Given a clinical scenario involving one of the client's senses, identify how the sense was misused or how to correct its use.
16. Identify the proper treatment for a sense that has been misused based on the element (earth, water, air, fire, or ether) that the sense is connected to. Given a clinical scenario involving tonification (bṛmhāṇa), identify the internal and external oil therapies (snehana) that should be recommended.
17. Given a clinical scenario involving tonification (bṛmhāṇa), identify the daily routines and lifestyle therapies that should be recommended.
18. Given a clinical scenario that requires pacification of the doṣas, identify the sensory therapy that should be recommended.
19. Given a clinical scenario that requires pacification of the doṣas, identify the exercise (vyāyāma) that should be recommended.
20. Given a clinical scenario that requires pacification of the doṣas, identify the heat therapies (agni and anagni cikitsā) that should be recommended.

Herbal:

21. Identify the side effects of overuse of each of the following herbs and the contraindications for its use: (1) āmalakī (Indian gooseberry) – *Emblica officinalis*; (2) dhānyaka (coriander) – *Coriandrum sativum*; (3) elā (cardamom) – *Elettaria cardamom*; (4) haridrā (turmeric) – *Curcuma longa*; (5) harītakī (chebulic myrobalan) – *Terminalia chebula*; (6) hiṅgu (asafoetida) – *Ferula assa-foetida*; (7) jātīphalā (nutmeg) – *Myristica fragrans*; (8) jīraka (cumin) – *Cuminum cyminum*; (9) laśuna (garlic) – *Allium sativum*; (10) lavaṅga (clove) – *Syzygium aromaticum*; (11) marica (black pepper) – *Piper nigrum*; (12) methikā (fenugreek) – *Trigonella foenum-graeceum*; (13) miśreya (fennel) – *Foeniculum vulgare*; (14) pippali (long pepper) – *Piper longum*; (15) rājikā (mustard seeds) – *Brassica juncea*; (16) śuṅṭhī (ginger) – *Zingiber officinale*; (17) tila (sesame) – *Sesamum indicu*; (18) tvak (cinnamon) – *Cinnamomum cassia*; (19) vibhītakī (beleric) – *Terminalia belerica*; (20) yavānī (ajwain or wild celery) – *Carum copticum*; (21) Trikaṭu cūrṇa; (22) Triphala cūrṇa; (23) Hiṅgvāṣṭaka; (24) Cyavanprāśa.
22. Given a clinical scenario that involves a client with symptoms of agni imbalance and āma, identify the herb(s) that should be used, when and how they should be administered to treat the presenting symptoms, support the malas, and restore doshic balance while protecting and building ojas.
23. Given a clinical scenario that requires pacification of the doṣas and increasing agni or metabolizing āma, identify the herb(s) that should be recommended for therapy.

24. scenario involving tonification (br̥mhaṇa), identify the appropriate herbal therapies.

Sample Questions:

Question 1:

A 47-year-old Caucasian female client has pitta prakruti and vata vikruti, vishama agni with āma, insomnia, anxiety, and constipation.

Which recommendation should be made?

- A. Use dry ginger and pippali
- B. Try reading to go to sleep
- C. Use nightshades and consume raw vegetables
- D. Eat white chicken with warming spices

Question 2:

A 60-year-old vata male client has a vegetarian diet. The client moved from humid tropical weather to a colder climate at higher altitude. Now, the client is having trouble sleeping and has dry hair and skin. The client barely gets in six hours of sleep, watches a lot of TV at night, and eats late night snacks.

What is the recommended vihara (daily routine) for this client?

- A. Performing almond oil abhyanga and avoiding late night snacks
- B. Performing mustard oil abhyanga and avoiding late night snacks
- C. Performing coconut oil abhyanga, going to bed earlier, and avoiding watching TV before sleep
- D. Performing sesame oil abhyanga, going to bed earlier, and avoiding watching TV before sleep

Question 3:

A female client is a data analyst that uses a computer for 90 percent of her work. The client often stays up until 11:30 p.m. or midnight reading articles and books on her e-tablet or watching television. The client complains of burning eyes and difficulty falling asleep.

How is this client misusing her sense of sight?

- A. Reading without sufficient external light
- B. Staring at device screens without blinking
- C. Overexposing herself to electronic device screens
- D. Staying awake well into pitta-time at night

CATEGORIES OF CIKITSĀ Section V

Section Objectives:

1. Given a clinical scenario that involves a prepubertal child over the age of five and that includes information about the child's constitution, vikṛti, and stage of life, identify the proper diet and lifestyle for the child.
2. Given a clinical scenario, identify how to use diet, effective eating behaviors, and herbal therapies to pacify the digestive system.
3. Given a clinical scenario, identify how to use daily routines to support healthy elimination to pacify the digestive system.
4. Given a clinical scenario, identify how to monitor client's progress and make appropriate adjustments to the treatment plan to pacify the digestive system.
5. Identify the proper practices for oleation of the ears, nose, eyes, and mouth. Identify contraindications for using oil in the ears, nose, eyes, and mouth.
6. Given a clinical scenario, identify diet, nasya, lifestyle, and herbs to support the goal of pacifying the doṣas in the head and neck region.
7. Given a clinical scenario, identify how to use visual therapy (sattvika intake of impressions and the proper use of color) to pacify the doṣas; balance prāṇa, tejas, and ojas; and cultivate sattva.
8. Identify a clinical scenario in which a referral should be made.

Sample Questions:

Question 1:

A 34-year-old client complains of constipation and bloating for the last year. The client started a demanding job that starts early in the morning and brings salads and protein bars to work to eat. The client reports that she barely has time to drink or go to the bathroom during her work shift.

The health counselor suggests getting up a little earlier to drink hot water, sit longer on the toilet, eat a warm cooked breakfast, and pack soup for lunch. The client reports back in two weeks feeling less bloated but is still constipated.

Which adjustments should be suggested for further improvements?

- A. Eat a bigger lunch
- B. Take daily laxatives
- C. Add trikatu before meals
- D. Begin meals with a cup of aloe

Question 2:

A 49-year-old female client complains of frequent sinus headaches. Lately, the client observes that a great deal of her hair is falling out. The client is afraid of aging and is especially concerned about facial wrinkles.

Which therapy should be suggested?

- A. Nasya and head massage
- B. Shirodhara with mustard oil
- C. Ingestion of more heating spices with food
- D. Steam treatment of the sinuses and head region

Question 3:

A 21-year-old client is a professional soccer player who injured his right foot while playing. The client needed assistance from the athletic trainers to get off the field. The client's foot started swelling immediately, and he complained of severe tenderness of the injured foot on the dorsal aspect.

What should the counselor do?

- A. Refer the patient to MD for evaluation
- B. Suggest application of mahanarayana oil
- C. Recommend that the client go home and rest and apply ice to reduce pain
- D. Advise resting and elevating the foot until the swelling subsides

ANSWER KEY

Foundations of Āyurveda:

Question 1:

Correct Answer: A, C

Question 2:

Correct Answer: D

Concepts of Āyurveda:

Question 1:

Correct Answer: C

Question 2:

Correct Answer: C

Assessment and Diagnosis:

Question 1:

Correct Answer: D

Question 2:

Correct Answer: B, C

Question 3:

Correct Answer: C

Recommendations, Treatment, and Other Interventions:

Question 1:

Correct Answer: D

Question 2:

Correct Answer: D

Question 3:

Correct Answer: C

Categories of Cikitsa:

Question 1:

Correct Answer: C

Question 2:

Correct Answer: A

Question 3:

Correct Answer: A

REFERENCE BOOKS FOR AHC EXAM

Classical Texts:

- Bṛhat Trayi: Charaka, Sushruta, Ashtanga Hridayam
- Sangraha Hridayam