

# **JB**Review

# **PHARMACY TECHNICIAN EXAM REVIEW GUIDE**

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#### **Production Credits**

Acquisitions Editor: Katey Birtcher  
Editorial Assistant: Teresa Reilly  
Associate Production Editor: Jill Morton  
Marketing Manager: Grace Richards  
Manufacturing and Inventory Control Supervisor: Amy Bacus  
Composition: Laserwords Private Limited, Chennai, India  
Cover Design: Scott Moden  
Rights and Photo Researcher: Sarah Cebulski  
Chapter Opener Image: © Evon Lim Seo Ling/Shutterstock, Inc.  
Printing and Binding: Courier Companies  
Cover Printing: Courier Companies

**To order this product, use ISBN: 978-1-4496-4341-6**

#### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Neville, Judith L.  
Pharmacy technician exam review guide / by Judith L. Neville.  
p. ; cm.  
Includes bibliographical references and index.  
ISBN 978-1-4496-2979-3 — ISBN 1-4496-2979-2  
I. Title.  
[DNLM: 1. Pharmacy—United States—Examination Questions. 2. Certification—United States—Examination Questions. 3. Drug Compounding—United States—Examination Questions. 4. Drug Dosage Calculations—United States—Examination Questions. 5. Pharmacists' Aides—United States. QV 18.2]  
615.1076—dc23

2011046409

6048

Printed in the United States of America

16 15 14 13 12 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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*In Dedication to Shawn A. Muhr*

*1984–2011*



*Killed in Action; Afghanistan*

*So we have the privilege of an education and the freedom to pursue our careers.*

*Thank you for your service.*

*Judy*



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# Introduction

The goal of this book is to help ease the stress that you might feel in taking the pharmacy technician certification exam. The stress you feel may be associated with the unknown. You may have many unanswered questions: What do I need to know for the exam? Do I know enough from working as a pharmacy technician for 10 years, or do I need to study? How do I sign up to take the exam? How hard is the exam? Why do I need to be certified?

The following chapters will answer these questions and more. I have taught pharmacy technician courses for the past 8 years. I've helped hundreds of students prepare for the national certification exam. Some of these students have never worked as a pharmacy technician. They enroll in a formal training program to prepare for a career and to earn a degree that will help them start a new career as a pharmacy technician.

I have also taught a large number of students who have been pharmacy technicians for more than 20 years. A few of my students own their own pharmacy and work beside their spouse, who is a licensed pharmacist. Some of the students I helped prepare for the exam were taking the exam because they wanted to achieve a personal goal. Many of the students I helped have been mandated by the state to become certified to keep their jobs.

The common thread among all of these students is that they're nervous and they're curious. They're curious about what's on the certification exam. They want to know how to prepare for the exam and what they should study.

## **THEY'RE NERVOUS, BECAUSE TAKING THIS EXAM IS A DEFINING MOMENT FOR THEM.**

*"After working as a tech for 10 years, do I know anything?"*

*"I've been in school for over a year. Have I learned what I need to know?"*

*"I may lose my job if I can't pass this test!"*

*"I've been out of school for 15 years! How will I ever be able to study and pass a test!"*

The intent of this text is to serve as a guide for the reader on what should be reviewed prior to sitting for the National Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam. This review guide is not for a beginner. Rather, it is designed as a review tool for pharmacy technicians who have been working in the pharmacy field for a number of years and need a review on areas they may be unfamiliar with, and for the pharmacy technician in training who needs a review of coursework prior to taking the exam.

Regardless of whether you have worked as a pharmacy technician for 5 years, 3 months, or are a student in a pharmacy technician training program, there are three areas that pharmacy technicians feel are the most important for them to review and study prior to taking the exam: math, aseptic compounding, and drug classes—brand/generic. For that reason, this textbook will provide a review of all information needed for the certification exam with an emphasis on these common trouble areas.

Abundant practice tests throughout this book and online will help you prepare for the exam. The practice tests are in multiple-choice question format, just like the questions on the certification

exam. A detailed answer key is provided with each practice test to help you understand the correct answer choice.

If you are one of those seasoned pharmacy technicians who has been working in the field for a number of years, you have a wealth of practical experience! You're looking for a tool to help you study and to help you review the topics you're a little unsure of. This review book has Task Sheets for each testing topic. The Task Sheet will help you get into that study mode and focus on what you need to know for the exam. Look for helpful tips, study plans, and evaluations on the Task Sheets.

If you are a pharmacy technician in training, you can use this review guide to test your knowledge obtained while in class. Then concentrate on areas that you need to review further.

While this book provides a comprehensive review, an emphasis is placed on the areas of study that technicians desire the most including basic math and pharmacy calculations. To help you study math and pharmacy calculations, this review guide is filled with practice tests. The practice tests are arranged in beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. Work your way through the test levels to feel comfortable in working pharmacy calculations.

Drug classification is another important area of study. There seems to be an endless number of medications on the market. Each medication has at least two names: brand and generic. Each medication has a certain mode of action and is classified according to that mode of action. You may be very nervous about knowing the medication classes and the brand/generic names of the medications. If you have been working in a retail pharmacy, you might be an expert in generic names of oral medication but will be unfamiliar with IV medications used in the hospital setting. Although a limited number of technicians work with chemotherapy, you are required to know chemotherapy drugs for the exam. This review guide will guide you on which drugs to know for the test, and provide hints on how to memorize drug classifications easily. There are many targeted practice tests to help you check what you've learned. Test-taking tips are included along with tips from certified pharmacy technicians who have successfully taken the exam.

With these tools, content review, and extensive practice tests, you can feel well prepared for the certification exam. Good luck and enjoy this learning process!

# About the Author

**Judith L. Neville** is the program chair for the pharmacy technician department at Vatterott College in Omaha, Nebraska. She also serves as the externship coordinator as well as teaching numerous classes, including aseptic technique, pharmacy practice, medical terminology, pharmacology, and review for the certification exam.

Judy has also taught a number of pharmacy technician certification review classes in southwest Iowa at Iowa Western Community College.

Judy is an expert member of the Institute for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians (ICPT), assisting with exam-writing for the Exam for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians (ExCPT).

She is an active member of the Iowa Pharmacy Association (IPA), serving on the Pharmacy Technician Advisory Committee. Judy is a director for the American Association of Pharmacy Technicians (AAPT). She is also an active member of the Nebraska Pharmacy Association (NPA), Pharmacy Technician Educator's Council (PTEC), and American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP).

She is a certified technician (CPhT) through both certification bodies: ICPT and PTCB.

Along with peer reviews for professional journals and book reviews, Judy has written articles for the *Journal of Pharmacy Technology*. She has authored two college-level pharmacy practice textbooks, *Mosby's Pharmacy Technician Lab Manual* and *Mosby's Pharmacy Management Software for Pharmacy Technicians*.



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