

## **Prioritizing Clients - Basics**

In this session you will learn there are 3 basic types of priority questions with clients-based on the situation. The first question to ask yourself when you start a priority question with clients is: “Where am I?”

- “Am I in the ED?”
- “Is this a disaster?”
- “Is this a shift report or home health setting?”

You will also learn how to assign clients up to the most experienced nurse and assign over to a less experienced nurse.

You will also learn how to make a final decision when you are down between 2 answers.

## **SHIFT REPORTS/Time Management**

**1) You receive a shift report from the night nurse. Prioritize the order in which you will check on the following clients. (*drag & drop*)**

1. An adolescent admitted 2 days ago for treatment of meningitis. He complains of a continuous headache that is partially relieved by medication.
2. An elderly man who underwent total knee replacement surgery 2 days ago. He is using the PCA pump frequently with good relief and occasionally asks for bolus doses.
3. A middle-aged woman who is demanding and needy. She was admitted for investigation of functional abdominal pain and is scheduled for diagnostic testing this morning.
4. A confused elderly woman who underwent surgery 4 days ago for hip fracture. She cries out and struggles during any type of nursing care and it is difficult to assess her pain.
5. A young man who was admitted with chest pain secondary to pneumothorax. His chest tube will be removed and his PCA pump discontinued today.

**2) The home health nurse is planning for the day's visits. Which client should be seen first?**

1. A 78-year-old who had a gastrectomy 3 weeks ago and has a PEG tube.
2. A 5-month-old discharged 1 week ago with pneumonia who is being treated with amoxicillin liquid suspension.
3. A 50-year-old with MRSA being treated with Vancomycin via a PICC line.
4. A 30-year-old with an exacerbation of multiple sclerosis being treated with cortisone via a centrally placed venous catheter.

**3) You have just received a change-of-shift report in the burn unit. Which client requires the most immediate assessment or intervention?**

1. A 22-year-old client admitted 4 days previously with facial burns due to a house fire who has been crying since recent visitors left.
2. A 34-year-old client who has returned from skin-graft surgery 2 hours ago and is complaining of level 8 pain (on a 10 scale).
3. A 45-year-old client with partial-thickness leg burns who has a temperature of 102° and blood pressure of 98/46 mmHg.
4. A 57-year-old client who was admitted with electrical burns 24 hours ago and has a blood potassium level of 6 mEq/L.

**4) After you receive a change-of-shift report at 7:00 AM, which client will you assess first?**

1. A 23-year-old with a migraine headache who is complaining of severe nausea associated with retching.
2. A 45-year-old who is scheduled for a craniotomy in 30 minutes who needs preoperative teaching.
3. A 59-year-old with Parkinson's who will need a swallowing assessment before breakfast.
4. A 63-year-old with MS who has an oral temperature of 101.8 and flank pain.

### Assigning UP

**5) The charge nurse is making assignments in the labor and delivery department. Which client should be assigned to the most experienced nurse?**

1. The 26-week gestational client who is having Braxton Hicks contractions
2. The 32-week gestational client who is having twins and is on bedrest
3. The 38-week gestational client who is 100% effaced and 10 cm dilated
4. The 39-week gestational client who has early decelerations on the fetal monitor

### Assigning Across/Down

**6) A float nurse from the medical-surgical unit is assigned to the postpartum unit. Which client should the charge nurse assign to the float nurse?**

1. The client who had a fetal demise at 34 weeks' gestation
2. The client who has a boggy fundus that massaging has not helped
3. The client who has had six saturated peri-pads in the last shift
4. The unmarried client who is giving her child up for adoption

**7) Which child should the RN pediatric nurse assign to the new graduate nurse (GN) who has just completed orientation to the pediatric unit?**

1. The 5-year-old child admitted in a sickle cell crisis whose patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) pump is not controlling the child's pain
2. The 6-year-old child in Russell's traction for a fractured femur who has insertion pin sites that are inflamed and infected
3. The 12-year-old child who is newly diagnosed with type 1 diabetes who needs medication teaching
4. The 16-year-old female diagnosed with scoliosis who is being admitted for insertion of a spinal rod in the morning.

## EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT TRIAGE

**8) The following clients come to the ED complaining of acute abdominal pain. Prioritize them for care in order of the severity of their conditions.**

1. A 35-year-old man complaining of severe intermittent cramps with three episodes of diarrhea 2 hours after eating.
2. An 11-year-old boy with a low-grade fever, right-lower quadrant tenderness, nausea, and anorexia for the past 2 days.
3. A 40-year-old woman with moderate upper-right quadrant pain who has vomited small amounts of yellow bile and whose symptoms have worsened over the past week.
4. A 65-year-old man with a pulsating abdominal mass and sudden onset of “tearing pain” in the abdomen and flank within the past hour.
5. A 23-year-old woman complaining of dizziness who reports she is possibly pregnant.
6. A 50-year-old woman who complains of gnawing midepigastric pain that is worse between meals and during the night.

**9) You are working in the triage area of an ED and the four following clients arrive at the same time. List the order in which you will assess these clients. (*drag & drop*)**

1. An ambulatory, dazed 24-year-old man with a bandaged head wound.
2. An irritable infant with a fever, petechiae, and nuchal rigidity.
3. A 35-year-old jogger with a twisted ankle who has a pedal pulse and no deformity.
4. A 50-year-old woman with moderate abdominal pain and occasional vomiting.

**10) Clients with signs and symptoms of heat-related illness come to the ED. Which client needs attention first?**

1. An elderly person who complains of dizziness and syncope after standing in the sun for several hours to view a parade.
2. A marathon runner who complains of severe leg cramps and nausea, and shows tachycardia, diaphoresis, pallor, and weakness.
3. A relatively healthy homemaker who reports that the air conditioner has been broken for several days and who manifests tachypnea, hypotension, fatigue, and profuse diaphoresis.
4. A homeless person who is a poor historian; has altered mental status, poor muscle coordination, and hot, dry, ashen skin; and whose duration of heat exposure is unknown.

**DISASTER TRIAGE**

**11) According to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) triage system, which situation is considered a level red (Priority 1)?**

1. Injuries are extensive and chances of survival are unlikely.
2. Injuries are minor and treatment can be delayed hours to days.
3. Injuries are significant but can wait hours without threat to life or limb.
4. Injuries are life threatening but survivable with minimal interventions.

**12) The nurse in a disaster is triaging the following clients. Which client should be triaged as an Expectant Category, Priority 4, and color black?**

1. The client with a sucking chest wound who is alert.
2. The client with a head injury who is unresponsive.
3. The client with an abdominal wound and stable vital signs.
4. The client with a sprained ankle, which may be fractured.

**13) You're working in a small rural community hospital. There's a fire in a local church and six injured clients arrive at the hospital. Many others are expected to arrive soon. Using disaster triage principles, place the following six clients in the order in which they should receive medical attention.**

***(drag & drop)***

1. A 52-year-old man in full cardiac arrest who has been receiving CPR continuously for the past 30 minutes.
2. A firefighter who is showing combative behavior and has respiratory stridor.
3. A 60-year-old woman who has full-thickness burns to her hands and forearms.
4. A teenager with a crushed leg that is very swollen, who is anxious and has tachycardia.
5. A 3-year-old child with respiratory distress and burns over more than 70% of the anterior body.
6. A 12-year-old with wheezing and very labored respirations unrelieved by an asthma inhaler.