GENERAL

atls post test questions 2013 with answers

Published: September 19, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Introduction

When you're preparing to take the **ATLS post test**, the pressure can feel overwhelming. The 2013 exam, in particular, has a reputation for being rigorous and demanding a deep understanding of trauma management principles. Many candidates search online for "atls post test questions 2013 with answers" hoping to find ready made solutions. While it's tempting to rely on shortcuts, the most effective way to succeed is to master the concepts behind each question, not just memorize answers.

In this article we'll break down the ATLS post test structure, highlight the key topics covered in the 2013 version, and provide a set of realistic sample questions with detailed answers. We'll also share proven study strategies, common pitfalls, and a curated list of resources to help you feel confident on test day. Whether you're a fresh graduate or a seasoned clinician, this guide will give you a clear roadmap to ace the ATLS post test.

What is ATLS?

Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) is a globally recognized educational program that teaches healthcare providers a systematic approach to the management of trauma patients. Developed by the American College of Surgeons, ATLS emphasizes a structured algorithm—often summarized by the acronym **ABCDE**—to assess and treat life threatening injuries efficiently.

The ATLS curriculum covers a wide array of topics, from airway management and breathing support to circulation, disability assessment, and exposure. The program also includes hands on simulation labs, case studies, and a written post test that evaluates your knowledge and application of the ATLS principles.

Overview of the ATLS Post-Test Exam

The ATLS post test is a multiple choice exam designed to assess your ability to apply the concepts taught during the course. Key characteristics of the 2013 version include:

- 70 questions total
- 90 minute time limit
- Scored out of 100 points
- Questions span the entire ATLS curriculum
- Focus on clinical decision making rather than rote memorization

Unlike the initial ATLS lecture, the post test is not graded for attendance; it's a formal assessment that can impact your certification status. Therefore, a thorough review and practice are essential.

Key Topics Covered in the 2013 ATLS Post-Test

Understanding the distribution of topics helps you allocate study time efficiently. The 2013 exam typically covers:

- Primary survey (ABCDE)
- Secondary survey and trauma history
- Airway adjuncts and ventilation strategies

- Hemorrhage control, tourniquets, and packing
- Fracture stabilization and orthopedic injuries
- Spinal precautions and cervical collar use
- Resuscitation protocols and blood product management
- Imaging modalities and their indications
- Complications of trauma (e.g., hypothermia, acidosis, coagulopathy)
- Special populations (pediatrics, elderly, pregnant patients)

Each section is weighted roughly equally, so a balanced review is key.

How to Prepare for the ATLS Post-Test 2013

Preparation begins long before the exam day. Here's a step by step plan:

1. Review the ATLS textbook and lecture notes – Focus on the chapters most frequently referenced in past exams.
2. Engage in simulation labs – Practice the ABCDE algorithm in a controlled environment; repetition solidifies muscle memory.
3. Use flashcards for quick recall – Create cards for high yield facts such as airway adjunct sizes or blood product ratios.
4. Take practice exams – Simulate test conditions to build stamina and identify weak areas.
5. Discuss case scenarios with peers – Teaching others reinforces your own understanding.
6. Rest and nutrition – Adequate sleep and balanced meals improve cognitive performance.

By following this structured approach, you'll be able to tackle each question with confidence.

Sample ATLS Post Test Questions 2013 with Answers

Below are ten representative questions that reflect the style and difficulty of the 2013 ATLS post test. Each question is followed by the correct answer and a detailed explanation. Use these as a benchmark for your own practice.

Question 1

During the primary survey, a patient presents with a penetrating chest wound and a blood pressure of 80/50 /mm /Hg. Which of the following is the most appropriate first step?

1. Intubate the patient immediately.
2. Insert a chest tube to relieve potential tension pneumothorax.
3. Apply a tourniquet to the upper extremities.
4. Begin rapid infusion of isotonic saline.

Answer: 2. Insert a chest tube to relieve potential tension pneumothorax.

Explanation:A penetrating chest wound with hypotension raises suspicion for a tension pneumothorax, a life threatening condition that requires immediate decompression. Air can accumulate in the pleural space, compressing the lung and heart, leading to rapid cardiovascular collapse. While rapid infusion and airway management are also critical, relieving the tension pneumothorax takes priority.

Question 2

Which of the following is the most appropriate management for a patient with a suspected cervical spine injury who is conscious and stable?

1. Apply a rigid cervical collar and transport without further evaluation.

2. Perform a full spine clearance with imaging only after transport.
3. Conduct a thorough secondary survey before immobilization.
4. Apply a cervical collar and obtain a CT scan of the cervical spine.

Answer: 4. Apply a cervical collar and obtain a CT scan of the cervical spine.

Explanation: The primary goal is to protect the cervical spine while ensuring accurate diagnosis. A rigid collar stabilizes the spine, and a CT scan provides detailed imaging of the cervical vertebrae, allowing for precise assessment of any fracture or dislocation. Delaying imaging or performing a full secondary survey before stabilization increases the risk of secondary injury.

Question 3

A 45 year old male presents with a pelvic fracture and ongoing blood loss. What is the recommended initial resuscitation strategy?

1. Administer 1 /L of normal saline and observe.
2. Insert a pelvic binder and start massive transfusion protocol (MTP).
3. Perform an immediate exploratory laparotomy.
4. Administer tranexamic acid only.

Answer: 2. Insert a pelvic binder and start massive transfusion protocol (MTP).

Explanation: Pelvic fractures often cause significant venous bleeding. A pelvic binder compresses the pelvis, reducing bleeding, while the MTP ensures a balanced ratio of blood products (1:1:1 or 1:1:2) to address coagulopathy and hypovolemia. Early initiation of MTP has been shown to improve survival in patients with massive hemorrhage.

Question 4

Which of the following is the most appropriate airway adjunct for a trauma patient with a GCS of 8 who is unable to protect his airway?

1. Nasopharyngeal airway (NPA).
2. Oropharyngeal airway (OPA).
3. Rapid sequence intubation (RSI).
4. Supraglottic airway device (SAD).

Answer: 3. Rapid sequence intubation (RSI).

Explanation:A GCS of 8 indicates a reduced level of consciousness and a high risk of airway obstruction or aspiration. Rapid sequence intubation provides definitive airway protection, ensuring adequate ventilation and oxygenation. NPAs and OPAs are adjuncts but do not secure the airway in this scenario.

Question 5

During the secondary survey, a patient has a suspected splenic injury. Which imaging modality is preferred to confirm the diagnosis?

1. Plain chest X ray.
2. Focused Assessment with Sonography for Trauma (FAST).
3. Contrast-enhanced CT scan of the abdomen.
4. Ultrasound of the pelvis.

Answer: 3. Contrast enhanced CT scan of the abdomen.

Explanation: While a FAST exam can quickly detect free fluid, a contrast enhanced CT scan provides detailed visualization of splenic parenchyma, lacerations, and active bleeding. It is the gold standard for diagnosing splenic injuries and guiding further management.

Question 6

Which of the following best describes the “lethal triad” in trauma patients?

1. Hypotension, hypothermia, and hyperglycemia.
2. Hypotension, hypoxia, and hyperkalemia.
3. Hypotension, hypothermia, and coagulopathy.
4. Hypotension, hyperthermia, and anemia.

Answer: 3. Hypotension, hypothermia, and coagulopathy.

Explanation: The lethal triad refers to the interrelated complications of hypovolemia (hypotension), low body temperature (hypothermia), and impaired clotting (coagulopathy). Each factor worsens the others, creating a cycle that can rapidly lead to death if not addressed promptly.

Question 7

A 22 year old female is brought to the emergency department after a motor vehicle collision. She is conscious but reports severe back pain. Which of the following is the most appropriate next step in the primary survey?

1. Apply a lumbar spine collar.
2. Perform a full spinal clearance with imaging only after transport.
3. Conduct a secondary survey before immobilization.
4. Start intravenous fluids immediately.

Answer: 1. Apply a lumbar spine collar.

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