

The 2026 PTCB Update.

What actually changed, and what to study — 12 sample drug cards, 2 math problems, and a scenario walkthrough.

13 pages

Print-ready

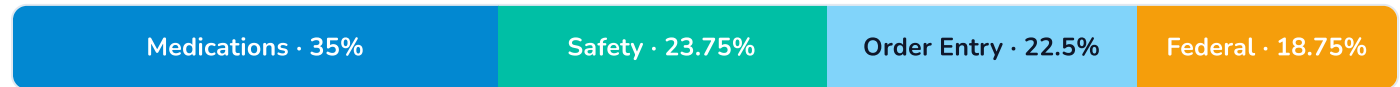
Free



What changed on Jan 6, 2026.

PTCB updated the exam content outline. Four domains, new weightings.

The Pharmacy Technician Certification Board's 2026 outline kept the same four knowledge domains but redistributed how heavily each is tested. **Medications** remains the largest domain at 35%, while **Federal Requirements** and **Order Entry & Processing** now carry more weight than before.



■ Medications · 35% ■ Patient Safety & QA · 23.75% ■ Order Entry & Processing · 22.5%

■ Federal Requirements · 18.75%

The math hasn't gone away — calculation-based knowledge still appears across the outline, especially in medication and order-entry tasks. Plan to practice it in the context of the drug or the order, not as an isolated topic.

Old vs. new outline.

Same four domains. Different weights. Highlighted in teal where the value moved.

Pre-2026 outline		2026 outline	
Medications	40%	Medications	35% ▼
Federal Requirements	12.5%	Federal Requirements	18.75% ▲
Patient Safety & QA	26.25%	Patient Safety & QA	23.75% ▼
Order Entry & Processing	21.25%	Order Entry & Processing	22.5% ▲

■ Teal marks a value that changed in the 2026 outline. Approximate weights — PTCB publishes domain percentages, not item counts.

The biggest single shift is Federal Requirements rising from ~12.5% to ~18.75%. Expect more DEA scheduling, controlled-substance handling, and HIPAA-style scenarios than older prep books prepared candidates for.

Where to focus your 30 days.

If you have one month and want max yield, study these.

GAINED WEIGHT

- Federal Requirements (DEA, HIPAA)
- Order Entry & Processing
- Controlled-substance workflows

LOST WEIGHT

- Pure Medications recall (still #1, just smaller)
- Patient Safety & QA (slight trim)
- Standalone math (rolled into other domains)

HIGHEST-YIELD TARGETS

- Top 200 drug brand/generic recall
- mg/kg + IV flow-rate math
- DEA Schedules I-V + refill rules

Sig says: if you only have 30 days, give 10 to drug recall, 10 to math, and 10 to federal. You'll cover roughly 80% of what shows up.

10

Days · Drugs

10

Days · Math

10

Days · Federal

Prinivil

Lisinopril

ACE inhibitor

⊕ INDICATION

ACE inhibitor used to treat hypertension; also used in heart failure and after certain heart attacks to improve outcomes.

▲ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Cough
- Dizziness
- Hyperkalemia
- Headache
- Increased creatinine (especially with renal artery stenosis)

Boxed Warning: BOXED WARNING: Fetal toxicity—discontinue as soon as pregnancy is detected.

"LISIN-'NO' pregnancy (fetal toxicity) + cough = ACE classic."

Top 200 · #4

Lipitor

Atorvastatin

Statin (HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor)

⊕ INDICATION

Used with diet and lifestyle changes to lower LDL cholesterol and triglycerides and raise HDL. Also used to reduce risk of heart attack and stroke in certain higher-risk adults.

▲ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Muscle/joint pain (myalgia/arthralgia)
- Diarrhea
- Nasopharyngitis
- Nausea
- Headache

"A-TORVA-statin = 'A'therosclerosis TORVA'd down (cholesterol down)."

Top 200 · #1

Glucophage

Metformin

Biguanide (antihyperglycemic)

⊕ INDICATION

Type 2 diabetes: improves blood glucose control as an adjunct to diet and exercise (alone or with other antidiabetic meds).

▲ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Abdominal discomfort
- Metallic taste
- Loss of appetite

Boxed Warning: BOXED WARNING: Metformin can rarely cause lactic acidosis (a medical emergency). Risk increases with significant kidney impairment, hypoxia, excessive alcohol, or iodinated contrast procedures.

"MET-formin = helps you 'MET' your glucose goal; remember LACTIC acidosis warning."

Top 200 · #2

Synthroid

Levothyroxine

Thyroid hormone

⊕ INDICATION

Replaces thyroid hormone for hypothyroidism. Also used to suppress TSH in certain thyroid cancer/goiter settings.

▲ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Palpitations
- Tremor
- Insomnia
- Heat intolerance/sweating
- Weight loss (if over-replaced)

Boxed Warning: BOXED WARNING: Not for treatment of obesity or for weight loss in patients with normal thyroid function.

"LEVO = 'level' your thyroid; never use for weight loss."

Top 200 · #3

Amoxil

Amoxicillin

Penicillin antibiotic

⊕ INDICATION

Penicillin antibiotic for susceptible bacterial infections (commonly ENT, respiratory, skin, and urinary infections); also used in certain H. pylori regimens with other drugs.

▲ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Rash
- Vomiting
- Yeast infections

“AMOXI-cillin = 'A-moxie' to fight bacteria (penicillin family).”

Top 200 · #23

Prilosec

Omeprazole

PPI (proton pump inhibitor)

⊕ INDICATION

Proton pump inhibitor (PPI) for GERD/erosive esophagitis; also used for certain ulcer conditions and hypersecretory states.

▲ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Headache
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Gas

“O-ME-PRAZOLE = 'Oh, my acid!' (turns down acid pump).”

Top 200 · #10

ProAir HFA / Ventolin

Albuterol

SABA (short-acting beta-2 agonist)

⊕ INDICATION

Short-acting bronchodilator for relief and prevention of bronchospasm (e.g., asthma) including exercise-induced bronchospasm.

▲ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Tremor
- Nervousness
- Fast heart rate (tachycardia)
- Headache
- Palpitations

“AL-BUT-erol = ‘All better’ breathing fast.”

Top 200 · #7

Zoloft

Sertraline

SSRI antidepressant

⊕ INDICATION

SSRI for major depressive disorder and several anxiety-related disorders (e.g., OCD, panic disorder, PTSD, social anxiety disorder) and for PMDD.

▲ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Insomnia
- Sexual dysfunction
- Dry mouth

Boxed Warning: BOXED WARNING: Antidepressants can increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors in children, adolescents, and young adults—monitor closely, especially at start or dose changes.

“ZOLOFT ‘lifts’ serotonin—watch for serotonin syndrome + suicidality warning.”

Top 200 · #11

Toprol-XL / Lopressor

Metoprolol

Beta blocker (beta-1 selective)

⊕ INDICATION

Beta-blocker used for hypertension and angina; certain forms are used in heart failure and post-MI management.

▲ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Fatigue
- Bradycardia
- Dizziness
- Hypotension
- Cold extremities

“METO-‘slow’ (heart rate slows).”

Top 200 · #6

Microzide

Hydrochlorothiazide

Thiazide diuretic

⊕ INDICATION

Thiazide diuretic for hypertension; also used to treat edema due to heart failure, liver disease, or kidney disorders.

▲ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Low potassium (hypokalemia)
- Dizziness
- Increased urination
- Photosensitivity
- Increased blood glucose or uric acid

“HCTZ = ‘Hydro-Chlor-ThiaZide’ makes you pee; watch K+.”

Top 200 · #16

Coumadin

Warfarin

Vitamin K antagonist anticoagulant

⊕ INDICATION

Vitamin K antagonist anticoagulant used to prevent and treat thromboembolism (e.g., DVT/PE) and reduce stroke risk in atrial fibrillation; used for mechanical heart valves.

▲ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Bleeding
- Easy bruising
- Nosebleeds
- GI bleeding
- Hematuria

Boxed Warning: WARNING: BLEEDING RISK — can cause major or fatal bleeding; requires regular INR monitoring; many drugs/diet changes affect INR.

“Warfarin = 'WAR on clotting'—watch INR + bleeding.”

Top 200 · #116

OxyContin

Oxycodone

Opioid analgesic · DEA C-II

⊕ INDICATION

• Management of pain severe enough to require an opioid analgesic and for which alternative treatments are inadequate.

▲ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Constipation
- Nausea/vomiting
- Drowsiness/sedation
- Dizziness
- Pruritus

Boxed Warning: Opioid risks: addiction, abuse, and misuse; life-threatening respiratory depression; accidental ingestion; neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome; CYP3A4 interaction; and risks from concomitant use with benzodiazepines or other CNS depressants.

Top 200 · #49

Two pharmacy-math problems.


Solution on the same page. No flipping back.

PROBLEM 1 · WEIGHT-BASED DOSING, UNIT CONVERSION

A 4-year-old child weighing 33 lb has been prescribed cefdinir 14 mg/kg PO daily.

What is the correct daily dose (rounded to the nearest 5 mg)?

A 95 mg

B 210 mg 

C 335 mg

D 460 mg

WORKED SOLUTION

- Step 1: Convert weight: $33 \text{ lb} \div 2.2 = 15 \text{ kg}$.
- Step 2: Multiply: $15 \text{ kg} \times 14 \text{ mg/kg} = 210 \text{ mg/day}$.
- Answer: 210 mg.

PROBLEM 2 · IV FLOW RATE

An IV order reads: Infuse 1,000 mL of normal saline over 8 hours.

What is the correct flow rate in mL/hr?

A 83 mL/hr

B 125 mL/hr 

C 250 mL/hr

D 8,000 mL/hr

WORKED SOLUTION

- Step 1: $\text{mL/hr} = \text{total volume} \div \text{total hours}$.
- Step 2: $1,000 \text{ mL} \div 8 \text{ hr}$.
- Answer: 125 mL/hr.

One scenario MCQ.

Federal requirements / patient safety. Wrong-option rationale included.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS · MEDIUM

A patient drops off a written prescription for oxycodone 10 mg, #60, with "5 refills" written on it.

What should the pharmacy technician do FIRST?

A Fill the prescription as written; the prescriber authorized the refills.

B Alert the pharmacist because oxycodone is a C-II and cannot be refilled. 

C Call the prescriber's office to confirm the refill quantity.

D Dispense the first fill and enter 5 refills into the system.

WHY EACH OPTION IS RIGHT OR WRONG

A Filling as written would violate federal controlled-substance law. Never dispense a C-II with refills, even if written.

B Oxycodone is a Schedule II controlled substance. By federal law, C-II prescriptions may not be refilled under any circumstances — a new written prescription is required for each fill. The technician's role is to flag this to the pharmacist; the pharmacist decides next steps with the prescriber.

C Not the first step. Even if the prescriber meant it, no number of refills on a C-II is legal. The pharmacist, not the tech, handles the call.

D Dispensing and entering the refills are both federally prohibited for C-II drugs.

Get the full app.

Top 200 drugs, math, and scenarios in a fast swipe workflow.

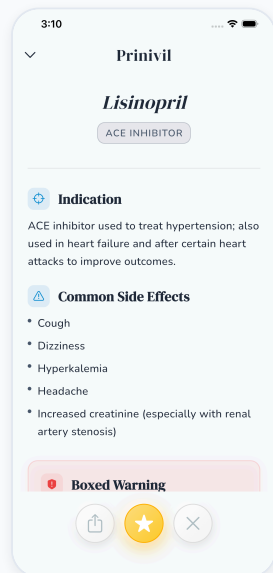
RxReflex on iOS & Android.

The first 20 drug cards are free — no signup, no email gate. Just open and start swiping.

First 20 drug cards free · No signup

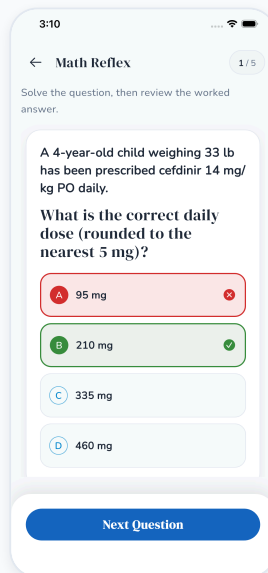


Scan to install · rxreflex.com/dl



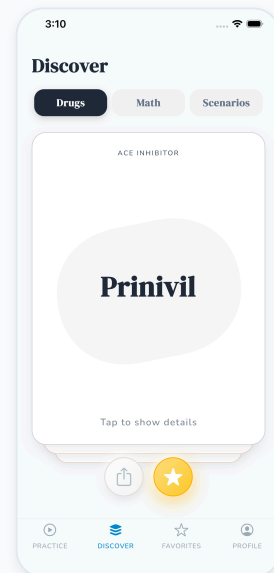
Drug detail

Brand, generic, class, indication, side effects, interactions, mnemonic.



Math Reflex

40 worked pharmacy-math problems with step-by-step solutions.



Discover

60 scenario MCQs across patient safety, federal, and order entry.