Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) Question-and-Answer Document

About the Course

Q: How would one describe the American Heart Association’s new Pediatric Advanced Life Support Course?

A: The American Heart Association’s Pediatric Advanced Life Support Course is totally redesigned to incorporate new science evidence from the 2005 American Heart Association Guidelines for CPR and ECC and a new teaching methodology. Through the PALS Course, pediatric healthcare providers will develop the knowledge and skills necessary to efficiently and effectively manage critically ill infants and children, resulting in improved outcomes. Skills taught include recognition and treatment of infants and children at risk for cardiopulmonary arrest; the systematic approach to pediatric assessment; effective respiratory management; defibrillation and synchronized cardioversion; intraosseous access and fluid bolus administration; and effective resuscitation team dynamics.

Q: Who is the target audience for this course?

A: The primary target audience for this course is pediatricians, emergency physicians, family physicians, physician assistants, nurses, nurse practitioners, paramedics, respiratory therapists, and other healthcare providers who initiate and direct advanced life support in pediatric emergencies.

Q: What topics will be covered in the course?

A: The PALS course will include the following content:

- CPR/AED Competency Testing
- Overview of Skills Stations
- Effective Resuscitation Team Dynamics
- Pediatric Assessment
- Recognition and Management of Respiratory Distress and Failure
- Recognition and Management of Shock
- Recognition and Management of Bradyarrhythmias and Tachyarrhythmias
- Recognition and Management of Cardiac Arrest
- Postresuscitation Management
- Pharmacology

Q: What topics will NOT be covered in the course?

A: The PALS Provider Course does not teach algorithms, ECG, or pharmacology information. If a student is not proficient in the ECG and Pharmacology information included in the precourse assessment tests, it is unlikely that the student will successfully complete the PALS Provider Course.
Q: What is the length of the initial and renewal course?

A: The approximate course length for the initial course is approximately 13 ½ hours. The renewal course is approximately 8 ½ hours with optional lessons and 6 ½ hours without optional lessons. All times are based on a 6 student to 1 instructor ratio.

Q: What is required to successfully complete the PALS Course?

A: To successfully complete the PALS Provider Course and obtain a card, students must:

- Actively participate in, practice, and complete all skills stations and learning stations:
  - Skills Stations:
    - Management of Respiratory Emergencies
    - Rhythm Disturbances/Electrical Therapy
    - Vascular Access
  - Learning Stations:
    - Core case discussions using a systematic approach to pediatric assessment and decision-making
    - Core case simulations
    - Effective resuscitation team behaviors
- Pass a skills test for child 1-rescuer CPR/AED and infant 1- and 2-rescuer CPR
- Pass a closed-book written exam with a minimum score of 84%
- Pass 2 PALS core case tests as a team leader – 1 cardiac case and 1 of either shock or respiratory

Implementation:

Q: What are the dates for implementation of the new PALS course materials?

A: The new materials must be taught in PALS courses within 90 days of the release date. The new course format and materials must be used in all PALS courses taught after April 1, 2007.

Q: What is the Precourse Preparation Checklist?

A: The PALS Precourse Preparation Checklist gives students information on what is needed to prepare for the course. Success in the course depends on completing the Precourse Preparation Checklist. To prepare for the course students must:

- Complete a BLS for Healthcare Providers Course or be able to perform high-quality CPR and use an AED according to 2005 guidelines
- Review the 12 Learning Station Competency Checklists in the PALS Course Guide
- Become familiar with the Practice Cases on the Student CD
- Understand the PALS algorithms in the PALS Course Guide and Provider Manual
- Complete the PALS Self-Assessment Tests on PALS ECGs, Pharmacology, and Practical Applications on the PALS Student CD

Students should bring the completed checklist along with their PALS Self-Assessment Tests scores to the course.

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Q: Is a student pretest required in PALS?

A: No, there is no pretest for PALS. Instead PALS students should complete the PALS Self-Assessment Tests on PALS ECGs, Pharmacology, and Practical Applications on the PALS Student CD. These self-assessment tests help students identify areas where they need further study before they come to class.

Q: What if a student doesn’t pass the Precourse Self-Assessment Tests?

A: A student cannot pass or fail the PALS Precourse Self-Assessment Tests. This tool allows each student to assess his/her knowledge, identify any gaps and remediate by studying applicable content in the PALS Provider Manual, PALS Course Guide, or other supplementary resources prior to taking the PALS course.

Q: Is there a PALS self-assessment test other than the one on the student CD?

A: Yes, there is a print version of the test available on the AHA Instructor Network.

Student Materials:

Q: What student materials are needed for the PALS Course?

A: Student materials for this course include:

- **Pediatric Advanced Life Support Course Guide (80-1412) (Set of 5)**
  - PALS Student CD
  - PALS Precourse Checklist
  - PALS Pocket Reference Card

Q: What is included on the Student CD for PALS?

A: PALS Student CD contents include:

- PALS Precourse Self-Assessment Test
- Practice Cases
- Resuscitation Team Concept
- Respiratory Management Resources and Procedures
- Vascular Access Procedures
- Rhythm Disturbances/Electrical Therapy Procedures
- ECG Basics
- Pharmacology
- Safety and Prevention
- Ethical and Legal Aspects of CPR in Children
- Chain of Survival

Q: Can you purchase the PALS Provider Manual separately?

A: No, the PALS Provider Manual is sold only in conjunction with the PALS Course Guide.
Q: Is each student required to receive both the Provider Manual and the Course Guide?
A: Since the Course Guide contains material the student will use during the course, each student must have a Course Guide. The Student CD, Precourse Checklist and Pocket Reference Cards are included with the Course Guide. The Provider Manual contains the depth of course information that each student needs to access and reference, but not necessarily take home with the student.

Instructor Materials

Q: What instructor materials are needed to teach PALS?
A: Instructor materials for the course include the following:
  • *Pediatric Advanced Life Support Instructor Manual* (80-1410)
    o Includes PALS Instructor CD, Lesson Maps, Renewal Lesson Maps, and Scenario Cue Cards
  • PALS Course Video
    o DVD (80-1409) or VHS (80-1416)
  • PALS Poster Set (80-1413)
  • PALS Emergency Cart Card Set (80-1408)
  • AHA Instructor Stopwatch (80-1018)
  OR
  • PALS Instructor Package (80-1411, includes PALS Course Guide, Provider Manual, Instructor Manual, two Course Video DVDs, Pocket Reference Card, Poster Set, and an AHA Red Stopwatch)
Supplemental:
  • PALS Tabletop Flip Chart (80-1435)

Q: What additional information for PALS is included on the Instructor CD?
A: The PALS Instructor CD includes the following:
  • Precourse materials,
    o Includes sample precourse letters, agenda, and the equipment list
  • Course Materials:
    o Lesson maps, progress checklists, testing checklists, critical skills descriptions, practice sheets, and skills station competency checklists
    o Case Discussions and Case Simulations
    o Flowcharts
  • Evaluation Materials
    o Written Test, PALS Core Case Testing, and Course Evaluation

Q: Is the PALS Tabletop Flip Chart required?
A: No, the PALS Tabletop Flip Chart is a supplemental item for PALS Instructors.

Q: What is the purpose of the PALS Tabletop Flip Chart?
A: The PALS Tabletop Flip Chart is intended to be used by PALS Instructors while facilitating the core case simulations. It is useful for facilities without additional video equipment in the small group simulations.