
2026 CEN Exam Study Guide & Blueprint Checklist

Make It Stick.

A practical printout for emergency nurses: prioritize all 11 domains, mark your progress, and turn missed questions into a focused review plan.

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- 01** Official 2026 domain distribution
- 02** Domain checklists
- 03** Make It Stick review prompts
- 04** Printable study tracker

11 DOMAINS / 150 SCORED ITEMS

Aligned to the BCEN CEN Examination Content Outline effective July 2026. The item counts are the official distribution of 150 scored items; this is an independent Nurscience study aid.

Free to download, print, and share.

Nurscience is independent and is not affiliated with or endorsed by BCEN.

The 2026 CEN Exam Blueprint

Official BCEN domain names and scored item distribution. Use the counts to plan review time, then adjust for your own weak areas.

DOMAIN	SCORED ITEMS
01 Cardiovascular Emergencies	18
02 Respiratory Emergencies	17
03 Neurological Emergencies	17
04 Gastrointestinal Emergencies	14
05 Genitourinary, Gynecology, and Obstetrical Emergencies	10
06 Mental Health Emergencies	13
07 Medical Emergencies	15
08 Musculoskeletal and Wound Emergencies	11
09 Head, Eye, Ear, Nose, Throat Emergencies	10
10 Environment and Toxicology Emergencies, and Communicable Diseases	13
11 Professional Issues	12
TOTAL SCORED ITEMS	150

Blueprint source: BCEN, **CEN Examination Content Outline** (effective July 2026). The full outline lists subtopics within each domain. Check the current BCEN outline again as your test date approaches.

[Open the official BCEN outline ↗](#)

[BCEN 2026 reference list ↗](#)

Domain Study Checklist

Read the topic cues, then mark Review, Practice, and Confident as you work. Each row tracks a domain, not individual subtopics.

01 Cardiovascular Emergencies

Acute coronary syndrome; arrest and dysrhythmias; dissection; heart failure, tamponade, shock; vascular and thromboembolic disease.

☐ Review☐ Practice☐ Confident**18 items**

02 Respiratory Emergencies

Asthma and COPD; airway obstruction and croup; pneumothorax and pulmonary embolus; inhalation injury; respiratory trauma.

☐ Review☐ Practice☐ Confident**17 items**

03 Neurological Emergencies

Stroke/TIA; seizure disorders; headache and meningitis; increased intracranial pressure; head/spinal trauma and neurogenic shock.

☐ Review☐ Practice☐ Confident**17 items**

04 Gastrointestinal Emergencies

GI bleeding and varices; obstruction, perforation and peritonitis; pancreatitis and cholecystitis; appendicitis; GI trauma.

☐ Review☐ Practice☐ Confident**14 items**

05 Genitourinary, Gynecology, and Obstetrical Emergencies

GU infection, calculi and torsion; renal failure/retention; ectopic pregnancy and bleeding; preeclampsia/HELLP; emergent delivery.

☐ Review☐ Practice☐ Confident**10 items**

06 Mental Health Emergencies

Suicidal or homicidal ideation; agitation and violence; intentional overdose; anxiety, depressive, psychotic and bipolar disorders.

☐ Review☐ Practice☐ Confident**13 items**

Tip: revisit any domain that is still unchecked after a mixed practice set.

Domain Study Checklist / continued

The topic cues below are selective examples from the BCEN outline, not a complete list of testable content.

07 Medical Emergencies

Anaphylaxis; sepsis; hypovolemic/distributive shock; fluid, electrolyte and endocrine disorders; substance use and withdrawal.

☐ Review☐ Practice☐ Confident**15 items**

08 Musculoskeletal and Wound Emergencies

Fracture/dislocation and amputation; compartment syndrome; avulsion/degloving; wound infection/bleeding; injection injuries.

☐ Review☐ Practice☐ Confident**11 items**

09 Head, Eye, Ear, Nose, Throat Emergencies

Ocular trauma, retinal emergencies and keratitis; maxillofacial trauma/infection; epistaxis; epiglottitis/peritonsillar abscess.

☐ Review☐ Practice☐ Confident**10 items**

10 Environment and Toxicology Emergencies, and Communicable Diseases

Burns, temperature and submersion injury; chemical/CO/cyanide exposure; bites; respiratory viruses, TB, C. difficile.

☐ Review☐ Practice☐ Confident**13 items**

11 Professional Issues

Triage, mass casualty and throughput; consent and end-of-life; forensic evidence; continuity, cultural humility, abuse/neglect and workplace safety.

☐ Review☐ Practice☐ Confident**12 items**

Make it stick: Mark confidence only after you can explain why the best answer is safer than the distractors and what you would reassess next.

High-Yield Make It Stick Review

Use these as short self-test prompts. They point you toward distinctions to study, not bedside treatment protocols.

01 First action

Name the immediate threat before choosing a response. Ask: airway, breathing, circulation, neurologic change, or safety? What needs reassessment first?

02 Chest + perfusion

With chest symptoms and instability, compare ACS, dysrhythmia, dissection, tamponade, pulmonary embolus, and shock. Which finding changes your priority?

03 Breathing

Separate airway obstruction from lower-airway disease, pneumothorax, pulmonary embolus, and inhalation injury. Track work of breathing and trajectory.

04 Time + neuro

For a new deficit, record the time course and changes in the neurologic exam. Compare stroke/TIA, seizure, trauma, infection, and raised intracranial pressure.

05 Bleeding + pain

For abdominal or pregnancy-related pain/bleeding, consider hemorrhage, perforation, ectopic pregnancy, and placental problems. Look for instability.

06 Limb + wound

After an injury, watch for evolving pain, swelling, and neurovascular change. Contrast fracture, dislocation, compartment syndrome, and wound complications.

07 Exposure + infection

Notice the source: heat/cold, submersion, burn, toxin, or communicable illness. Revisit safety, decontamination/isolation, and reassessment.

08 Safety + systems

Practice triage under competing demands. Revisit consent, forensic evidence, abuse/neglect, continuity of care, and workplace violence.

THE RATIONALE LOOP

For every missed question, write: **the clue I missed** → **my first action** → **why the best answer wins** → **what I reassess**. Review that note before your next mixed set.

CEN Study Tracker

Write a lesson or topic, practice volume and score, and the weak area to revisit. Check confidence after you can explain your reasoning.

DOMAIN	LESSON / TOPIC REVIEW	PRACTICE QUESTIONS	SCORE	WEAK AREAS / NEEDS REVIEW	CONFIDENT
01 Cardiovascular					☐
02 Respiratory					☐
03 Neurological					☐
04 Gastrointestinal					☐
05 GU / GYN / OB					☐
06 Mental Health					☐
07 Medical					☐
08 MSK / Wound					☐
09 Head / Eye / ENT					☐
10 Env. / Tox. / ID					☐
11 Professional					☐

Date started: _____ Target exam date: _____

KEEP STUDYING WITH NURSCIENCE

Start free: try our CEN practice questions at nurscience.com/free-practice-questions/. **Want a guided path?** The full course includes 1,600 original CEN-style practice questions with detailed rationales, 90+ written lessons and clinical case labs, practice across all 11 domains, randomized 150-question practice exams, and a separate 150-question benchmark exam.

[Free practice ↗](#)

[Explore the full course ↗](#)