

CCS Mnemonics Cheat Sheet

USMLE Step 3 CCS — Quick Reference Guide

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1. ED Stabilization (VOMICAA)

Order these FIRST in the ED before diagnostic workup

- V — Vitals
- O — Oxygen / Oximetry
- M — Morphine / Metoclopramide / Mg (as needed)
- I — IV fluids
- C — Cardiac monitoring
- A — AccuCheck (glucose)
- A — Acetaminophen / Aspirin (+ABG if needed)

TIP: In true emergencies: TREAT FIRST, then workup. Ordering labs before treatment = deduction.

2. Routine Orders for Every Patient (C3-T3-F3)

Baseline labs and imaging — order on every patient

- C3** — CBC, CMP, CXR
- ECG, HCG (qualitative urine), Urinalysis
- T3** — Troponin, Tox screen, TSH
- F3** — Fasting lipid/glucose, Finger oximetry, Fluids (NSS)

TIP: Pick QUALITATIVE urine HCG for faster results. If positive, cancel contraindicated tests.

3. Critically Ill Patients (BETA LACTAMS)

Add these for serious / ICU-level patients

- B** — Blood type & screen, PT/PTT/INR
- E** — ESR, CRP (inflammation markers)
- T** — Tubes (NGT, Foley, chest tube)
- A** — ABG
- L** — Lactate / LDH
- A** — Ammonia (if altered mental status)
- C** — Cultures & gram stains (blood if SIRS)
- T** — Telemetry / cardiac monitor
- M** — Magnesium
- S** — STI screen (HIV, Hep panel, GC/Chlamydia, VDRL)

4. Admitting Orders (AID LUV Tubes)

When admitting any patient to the floor or ICU

- A** — Activity level
- I** — IV Fluids
- D** — Diet
- L** — LMWH (DVT prophylaxis)

- U — Urine output monitoring
- V — Vitals frequency
- Tubes — NG tube, Foley, chest tube as needed

5. Pre-Op Checklist (TPN A CSF)

Before any surgical procedure

- T — Type and screen (blood)
- P — PT/PTT/INR
- N — NPO
- A — Antibiotic (Cefazolin prophylaxis)
- C — Consent
- S — Surgery name ordered
- F — Fluids

TIP: Also consider: CBC, CMP, EKG, CXR, Anesthesia consult

6. Preventive Care — FREE POINTS! (DR VA2S4C2)

Order these at the end of EVERY case

- D — Diet (low cal, diabetic, low K, high fiber)
- R — Refer (social services, dietitian, PT, substance abuse)
- V — Vaccines (flu, pneumo, Tdap, shingles, HPV)
- A — Avoid (smoking, alcohol, drugs)
- A — Activity / Exercise
- S — Screening (mammo, colonoscopy, pap, AAA, lung CA)
- S — Safe sex, treat partner
- S — Seatbelt
- S — Side effects counseling
- C — Compliance
- C — Counsel / reassure / advise

TIP: These are FREE POINTS on almost every case! You will NOT lose points for ordering these unnecessarily.

7. Vaccines to Consider (P-MIST)

- P — Pneumococcal
- M — Meningococcal
- I — Influenza
- S — Shingles
- T — Tdap

8. Scoring Quick Rules

Know what costs you points and what doesn't

DEDUCTIONS:

- Missing critical orders
- Wrong patient location
- Delayed treatment in emergencies

- Unnecessary **INVASIVE** procedures (intubation, dialysis, chest tube)

SAFE (no deductions):

- Extra diagnostic tests / labs
- Over-ordering non-invasive workup
- Full physical exam on every patient

TIP: Rule: More is better, EXCEPT for invasive interventions.

9. Timing Strategy

- 10-minute case = Only 8 min for results (SCRAMBLE!)
- 20-minute case = 18 min for results (can relax)
- Advance clock by 1 DAY at a time (not "next result")
- Last 2 minutes = End-of-case orders ONLY
- Use "see me as needed" when stable

10. Location Strategy

- **ICU** — Unstable / critical patients
- **ED** — Acute presentations
- **Medical Floor** — Stable inpatients
- **Office** — Outpatient follow-up

TIP: PRO TIP: Never send patients home! Keep them hospitalized or in ED.