

Textbooks and Course Syllabi

Limit your use of textbooks and course syllabi for Step 1 review. Many textbooks are too detailed for high-yield review and include material that is generally not tested on the USMLE Step 1 (eg, drug dosages, complex chemical structures). Syllabi, although familiar, are inconsistent across medical schools and frequently reflect the emphasis of individual faculty, which often does not correspond to that of the USMLE Step 1. Syllabi also tend to be less organized than top-rated books and generally contain fewer diagrams and study questions.

Integration of AI in Medical Education: Transforming USMLE Preparation

The integration of AI into education signals a paradigm shift in the acquisition and application of medical knowledge. AI's increasing ability to process extensive data sets and adapt to various learning styles makes it an attractive tool in medical training and practice.¹⁷ Studies have demonstrated that AI language models are capable of achieving high accuracy rates when answering USMLE-style questions, underscoring its potential in supporting medical education.¹⁸

Although undeniably powerful, effectively utilizing AI as a study tool requires both practice and individual trial and error. We suggest the following approaches and prompts that might help learners more effectively harness AI for exam preparation.

Tailored Mnemonic Creation: Devise unique mnemonics to aid in memorizing complex medical terms efficiently. AI models can be highly creative in generating new ones, although feedback and iteration will likely be needed to produce mnemonics that are both accurate and memorable.

Example prompt: Create a food-related mnemonic for remembering adverse effects 1, 2, and 3 of Drug A.

Custom Summarization of Medical Texts: Efficiently condense extensive medical literature into concise summaries, facilitating efficient and rapid topic reviews.

Example prompt: Summarize this medical school lecture into bullet points. Decrease length by 80%.

AI-Generated Custom Quizzes: Create focused practice questions.

Example Prompt: Create three vignette-style multiple choice questions testing presentations of lysosomal storage disorders.

Clinical Case Simulations: Utilize AI-powered simulations of realistic clinical scenarios to practice decision-making skills and application of medical knowledge.

Example prompt: Create an exercise to practice analyzing acid-base disorders requiring Winter's formula with step-by-step explanations.

Progestins	Levonorgestrel, medroxyprogesterone, etonogestrel, norethindrone, megestrol.
MECHANISM	Bind progesterone receptors, ↓ growth and ↑ vascularization of endometrium, thicken cervical mucus.
CLINICAL USE	Contraception (forms include pill, intrauterine device, implant, depot injection), endometrial cancer, abnormal uterine bleeding. Progestin challenge: presence of bleeding upon withdrawal of progestins excludes anatomic defects (eg, Asherman syndrome) and chronic anovulation without estrogen.

Antiprogestins	Mifepristone, ulipristal.
MECHANISM	Competitive inhibitors of progestins at progesterone receptors.
CLINICAL USE	Termination of pregnancy (mifepristone with misoprostol); emergency contraception (ulipristal).

Contraception	Birth control		
	METHOD	MECHANISM	NOTES
Hormonal	Estrogen combined with progestins	Prevent ovulation by ↓ GnRH → ↓ LH/FSH → no estrogen surge → no LH surge	Forms include pill (OCPs), transdermal patch, vaginal ring
	Progestin-only	Progestins also thicken cervical mucus (↓ sperm entry) and thin endometrium (less suitable for implantation)	
Intrauterine device	Copper IUD (hormone free)	Copper IUD causes local inflammation that is toxic to sperm and ova preventing fertilization and implantation	IUDs ↑ risk for abnormal uterine bleeding; insertion contraindicated in patients with active STI
	Progesterone IUD	Same as progestins	
Surgical	Males—vasectomy Females—tubal ligation	No sperm in ejaculate Sperm cannot reach ova	Irreversible

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Tocolytics	Medications that relax the uterus; include terbutaline (β ₂ -agonist action), nifedipine (Ca ²⁺ channel blocker), indomethacin (NSAID). Used to ↓ contraction frequency in preterm labor and allow time for administration of glucocorticoids (to promote fetal lung maturity) or transfer to appropriate medical center with obstetrical care.
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