OSCE checklist for intake and output chart

An OSCE checklist for an intake and output chart covers measuring and recording all fluids in and out, totalling them for the period, working out the balance and reporting concerns such as low urine output.

OSCE checklist for intake and output chart: steps to practise

1. Clean your hands, introduce yourself, confirm the patient's name and date of birth (and wristband if an inpatient), explain why fluids are being recorded and ask them to help by keeping drinks and urine for measuring.
2. Check the chart has the right patient's details and the correct date and start time.
3. Record oral intake when it is taken, with the type and amount in millilitres.
4. Record IV fluids and tube feeds with the type and volume actually given, as the chart asks.
5. Wear gloves and an apron when handling body fluids. Measure urine each time it is passed or drained, using a graduated jug or the catheter bag scale, and record it with the time.
6. Record other losses such as vomit, drain output, stoma output and diarrhoea, with the amount if measurable. Note losses you cannot measure, such as heavy sweating or a wet bed.
7. Read the measurement at eye level on a flat surface, dispose of the contents in the sluice, clean the container, remove gloves and apron and clean your hands.
8. At the end of the period, total intake and total output separately.
9. Work out the balance by subtracting output from intake and note whether it is positive or negative.
10. Look at the pattern with the observations. Report low or falling urine output, a large positive or negative balance, or signs of dehydration or fluid overload to the nurse in charge at once. Sign the chart.

What candidates commonly forget

- Writing estimates instead of measuring
- Forgetting IV fluids and tube feeds

- Not wearing gloves and apron with body fluids
- Not totalling at the end of the period
- Not reporting low urine output
- Leaving the chart unsigned or the time missing

Local policy comes first

This is our own practice checklist. Your college, hospital or country may do some steps differently. Where local policy and this list disagree, follow local policy.

Practise the hands-on steps with a classmate or in a skills lab, because an AI patient cannot watch your technique. You can practise the talking part with an AI patient, and try one station free with no sign-up. Next, try Fluid balance chart calculation after hip surgery. Back to the medical surgical nursing OSCE page: medical surgical nursing OSCE, or see the full OSCE checklist list.

Common questions

What is the OSCE checklist for an intake and output chart?

Confirm the patient and chart, record intake and output as they happen in millilitres, total each, work out the balance, look at the trend and report concerns.

What counts as intake?

Oral fluids, IV fluids, tube feeds and fluids given with medicines. Your chart lists the items to include.

What counts as output?

Urine, vomit, drain fluid, stoma output and diarrhoea. Note losses you cannot measure as well.

When should I report?

Report low or falling urine output, a large imbalance or signs of dehydration or fluid overload to the nurse in charge straight away.

Sources

- NICE CG174: intravenous fluid therapy in adults in hospital
- NMC: standards of proficiency for registered nurses

Checked 2026-11-13. Fees and rules change, so confirm them with the regulator before you book.