

Orientation

for the Susan Testa Nutrition CNS Exam
Prep Course 2026



Presented By: Kimberly Foss

www.susantestanutrition.com



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Welcome!

We're so excited to have you with us!

Today's purpose & what to expect:

- This is our orientation to talk about the structure and expectations for the test prep program!
 - Will be recorded for review and for those who cannot attend live
 - Should not be the 1st time you're seeing these materials.
Remember, this should all be *review*!
- **Purpose:** connect faces with names, build community, and form study groups!
- **Reminder:** Please complete the ***Study Group Questionnaire***
 - **Questions to include:** time zone, frequency of study, weekly hours available, etc.
 - **Please be sure to complete those questionnaires by 2/21/202**
 - Groups matched based on availability, time zone, and effort level.
 - **You are not obligated to join a group



Questions?

Please email us at

stnexamprep@gmail.com



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Meet Your Exam Prep Course Facilitator!



Kimberly Foss, MS

- MS in Nutrition & Integrative Health with a focus in Human Clinical Nutrition & Herbal Medicine
- BS in Business, Entrepreneurship & Small Business Management
- MUIH Alumni
- Licensed Nutritionist in the state of Washington

& a big shoutout to our course building team!

Susan Testa, MS, RDN, LDN

Alice Lloyd, MS

Shuchita Madan, MS, CNS

Kimberly Foss, MS



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Exam Expectations

- **Hard by design:** It's a board exam!
- **Passing ≠ perfection:** Very few people leave the exam feeling like they've 'nailed it' (this is normal!)
- The board intentionally prevents 100% scores to maintain rigor.
- **Pass rate target:** ~65–70%
 - For reference: Nursing boards ~70%; Physician boards 85–95%
- There is less guidance/materials for CNS exam than for MD/NP boards → explains lower pass rates.
 - *That's why we're here!*

Exam Structure:

- Strong science programs (Bridgeport, etc.) = advantage in biochem.
- Clinical-heavy programs (like MUIH) may need extra review.
- Biochemistry = emphasized more heavily in 2024+ exam cycles.
- Question styles:
 - Mix of "easy wins" and extremely detailed/obscure ones.
 - Some may feel "out of scope" so reread carefully, and contest if it truly is.
 - Trick phrasing (e.g., "best answer" among several possible).



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Study Group Structure

- Groups are **self-directed!**
 - I will not oversee or manage your small groups outside of setting them up
- **Keys for success:**
 - Everyone participates equally!
 - Not one person doing all the work
 - Match commitment levels
 - More study time vs. less study time
 - Time & meeting expectations
 - Shared responsibility = stronger group outcomes.
- Please fill out your questionnaires asap so we can roll out groups the following week.



**If you're going to be a part of
a small group...**

Show up, communicate, engage, and don't ghost.

If you can't participate, tell your group!



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Study Group

Best Practices

- **Meet weekly** (1–2 hours typical)
 - Variable based on needs!
- This will need to be determined by you and your groups. *This is not something we will manage!*
- **Align material:** Groups often review the same modules, then discuss together.
- **Divide topics** → use “teach-back” (if you can teach it, you know it).
- Bring questions, insights, and weak areas to meetings.



Suggestions:

- Many groups mix in **practice questions** (STN CNS Test Prep, Nutrition Test Prep bank with 2,000 questions, Quizlet, [Study.com](https://www.study.com). etc).
- Use **real client cases** to apply concepts (especially micronutrients, meds, symptoms, family history).
- **Best groups:** at least 2–3 highly engaged members to keep things running if someone drops.



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Study Content & Resources

Modules:

- Released gradually to help with pacing.
- Mix of easy and harder content to mimic the structure of the exam
- Case studies scattered throughout to help with clinical perspectives of concepts

Content prioritization:

- Biochem + micronutrients = bulk of exam.
 - Amino acids are also big!
- Public health is small %, don't overinvest here.

Practice Exams

- 8 practice tests through the course
 - Paired with each domain
- Explanations sent by email → study those, not just the answers.
 - ****Make sure to put in your email at the top of the Google Form when taking the practice tests to get your answers!**
 - Each practice test has random *and* domain-specific questions to test your knowledge right after studying that particular material
- **Nutrition Test Prep.com**: separate resource with ~2,000 CNS-style questions.

Memorization Strategies

- Smell association (e.g., peppermint/lavender oil while studying & again on exam day)
- Music to help with focus
- Consider the use of memorization tools like mnemonics to help



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Study Time Recommendations

Meet yourself where you're at

- **Not working with clients:**
 - ~15 hrs/week (≈2 hrs/day).
- **Actively working with clients:**
 - ~10 hrs/week.
- **Science-heavy background:**
 - May get by with 6–10 hrs.
- **Time** = less important than quality of study (focused sessions, active recall, practice Qs).
- **Last 2 weeks:** no new material → focus on review and weak areas.



Don't cram: weekend before, night before, or morning of. By then, you either know it or you don't.

Use pre-exam time to relax and get focused.

Take study time seriously. Schedule it like an appointment.

Study will be self-guided → stay disciplined.



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Common Challenges & Mindset

- **Overwhelm is normal** — everyone feels it.
- **Expect questions you've "never seen before"** → this is not a reflection of ability.
- **Biochem has expanded** → expect pathway details (e.g., where metabolites enter Krebs cycle).
- **Trick Qs:** *"What is the best answer?"* among several correct ones.
- **Retakes happen** (not failure, just part of process).



Self-care matters: rest, stress management, downtime.

Burnout = lower retention!

Plan for breaks & restoration opportunities during your studying season



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Logistics & Communication

- All of the program information can be found in **2 convenient locations**:
- **To gain access:**
 - Join the Facebook group
 - You'll need a password to gain access to the site resource center
 - Keep an eye out for emails but outside of our live sessions every other week, this is a self-guided review course



Facebook Group

- Announcements, practice questions, community sharing & support



Susan Testa Nutrition Website (Main Hub!!)

- Program resources (e.g., modules, practice tests, e-books, etc.)
- Official announcements
- Study group assignments

Participant Experiences & Tips

- Retakes can happen, *this is a big exam!*
- Clinical experience improves confidence and recall.
- Taking exam right after school → works better for science-heavy programs.
 - Clinical-heavy (MUIH) may benefit from waiting, and brushing up on these topics.
- **Teaching, webinars, and mentoring reinforce knowledge.**
 - Focus study time on biochem, micronutrients, and case application, *not on small domains!!*



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Shared experiences:

- **Feeling unprepared is universal.**
 - Most of everyone leaves the exam feeling overwhelmed
- **Importance of deeper detail**, not just mnemonics.
 - Understand the *why* behind what you're studying to gain better understanding of the whole picture
- Practical case use **strengthens recall!**

Closing & Next Steps

- **Stay engaged with your group.**
- Practice exams are learning tools, not just score checks.
 - Study the questions you missed, understand the why
- Emphasize mechanisms, patterns, and connections over just memorization.
- Expect announcements in **Facebook & on the website** next week with study group details.
- **Remember:** You can use this course for as long as you need to pass the exam. I've been in your shoes, I know how this chapter feels. Reach out if you need anything. ***We're in this together! You got this!***



WHAT'S NEXT?

- Look out for group announcements if you plan to participate in a small group
- Start building a study schedule that fits within your life & gives you enough time to brush up on everything
- Reach out if you have any questions!!

Email: stnexamprep@gmail.com



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Thank You!

Questions?

