



## General Information about Spore Strip Testing

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<b>Purpose:</b>	A spore strip is used during the sterilization cycle to check if your sterilizer is functioning correctly. The spore strip is also called a biological indicator. The spore strip should be representative of the same type of package or tray, and items routinely processed in the sterilizer and the most difficult to sterilize. For example, an item packaged in multiple layers of wrappers creates a greater challenge than an item in a peel pouch. So if you routinely sterilize items this way, the spore strip should be wrapped in that same manner. If you are sterilizing instruments in a peel pouch, then the spore strip can be placed in a peel pouch.
<b>Develop a Procedure:</b>	Develop a procedure based on the manufacturer's recommendations and the governing regulations. Once this procedure has been developed, train and monitor personnel to ensure they are following the procedure. Continuous training and competency assessments help to minimize or eliminate human errors, which may cause sterilization failures.
<b>Daily Operations:</b>	
<b>For steam sterilization:</b>	Follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding water purity requirements, filling, draining, and general maintenance of the system. Distilled or deionized water is usually recommended to help prevent the buildup of minerals in the steam generating system and to ensure the purity of the steam generated for sterilization. Each day before the sterilizer is used, check to make sure there is enough water in the sterilizer for the number of loads to be processed,.
<b>For dry heat sterilization:</b>	Follow the manufacturer's instructions. A complete cycle involves heating the oven to the required temperature, maintaining that temperature for the proper time interval for that temperature, turning the machine off and cooling the articles in the closed oven till they reach room temperature.
<b>Why SCHED?</b>	<p>The Saginaw County Health Department Laboratory Services Division (SCHED-LSD) has been providing reliable results for over 50 years. We have a wide variety of testing that includes clinical, environmental, water, drug of abuse testing, and food testing to mention a few. Our clients have ranged from health clinics, lawyers, well operators, and general public. Trained and competent Medical Technologists and Laboratory Scientists perform the testing. We uphold confidentiality, and maintain testing records, which may include chain of custody. Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certifies the SCHED-LSD for high complexity testing. We are an approved testing lab for the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The State of Michigan accredited the Saginaw County Health Department with commendation, and we are a Regional Laboratory for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.</p> <p>Our monthly spore testing services will help you meet the regulations. For your convenience, copies of the results will be sent to you and to your local regulatory authority monthly. Your results can be mailed or faxed. An email option is being developed.</p> <p>This spore testing service will provide you with accurate and reliable results within 10 days of receipt. All positive tests will be checked microscopically and gram stained. This lab will contact you within 8 hours if a spore test is positive. We will supply up to 2 replacement strips at no charge.</p>

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