Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide

Everything you need from our exam experts!

Table of Contents

Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- **Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,**
- **Improve accuracy and speed,**
- **Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and**
- **Approach the exam with greater confidence.**

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here’s how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don’t just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There’s no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

1. What is a common use for Stamey needle in surgical procedures?

A. Bladder augmentation

B. Urethral dilation

C. Bladder suspension for stress incontinence

D. Pelvic organ prolapse repair

2. Which of the following incisions is oblique?

A. Epigastric

B. Kocher

C. Paramedian

D. Pfannenstiel

3. What is the minimum Fahrenheit temperature required for sterilization in a prevacuum steam sterilizer?

A. 249-255

B. 263-269

C. 270-276

D. 256-262

4. How are rickettsiae transmitted?

A. Arthropod bites

B. Airborne organisms

C. Physical contact

D. Blood exposure

5. What muscle group relaxes when a small pad is placed under a patient's head in the supine position?

A. Cremaster

B. Deltoid

C. Strap

D. Pyramidal

6. Which of the following structures is located in the alveolar processes?

A. Teeth

B. Sinuses

C. Tonsils

D. Villi

7. What position is most commonly utilized for mitral valve replacement surgery?

A. Prone

B. Sims

C. Supine

D. Kraske

8. What is the minimum number of minutes to sterilize unwrapped metal instruments with lumens in the gravity displacement sterilizer at 270 degrees F?

A. 5

B. 10

C. 15

D. 20

9. Which device is used to obtain specimens during a bronchoscopy?

A. Test tube

B. Suction container

C. Lukens tube

D. 4x4 Raytec sponges

10. What is the definition of otosclerosis?

A. Earache

B. Tinnitus

C. Tearing of tympanic membrane

D. Bony overgrowth of stapes

Answers

1. C
2. B
3. C
4. A
5. C
6. A
7. C
8. B
9. C
10. D

Explanations

1. What is a common use for Stamey needle in surgical procedures?

A. Bladder augmentation

B. Urethral dilation

C. Bladder suspension for stress incontinence

D. Pelvic organ prolapse repair

The Stamey needle is primarily used in surgical procedures aimed at treating stress incontinence, particularly through bladder suspension techniques. Stress incontinence occurs when there is involuntary leakage of urine during activities that increase abdominal pressure, such as exercising or sneezing. In the context of bladder suspension, the Stamey needle is utilized to help place sutures that support the bladder neck and prevent involuntary leakage. This procedure typically involves anchoring the bladder to the pelvic sidewalls, which can significantly improve patient outcomes by restoring normal urinary function. The other options, while related to urology and pelvic floor procedures, do not commonly involve the Stamey needle in a standard way. Bladder augmentation refers to an increase in bladder capacity and is usually performed with other methods. Urethral dilation is a different procedure aimed at widening the urethra itself, and pelvic organ prolapse repair plans typically employ different techniques and instruments that do not include the Stamey needle. Thus, the use of the Stamey needle aligns specifically with bladder suspension for the treatment of stress incontinence.

2. Which of the following incisions is oblique?

A. Epigastric

B. Kocher

C. Paramedian

D. Pfannenstiel

The Kocher incision is classified as an oblique incision because it follows a slanted approach to access the underlying structures, particularly the right upper quadrant of the abdomen where the gallbladder is located. An oblique incision is characterized by its angle relative to the midline of the body, often running diagonally. This is particularly advantageous in surgeries in the abdomen, allowing for less tension on the sutures and potentially better cosmetic outcomes. In the context of surgical choices, other incision types mentioned are categorized differently. The epigastric incision is typically made horizontally across the upper abdomen. The paramedian incision runs parallel to the midline but is vertical in orientation, and the Pfannenstiel incision is a transverse incision often used for gynecological surgeries. Each of these incision types serves distinct purposes and provides access to different anatomical areas, but they do not share the oblique characteristic that defines the Kocher incision.

3. What is the minimum Fahrenheit temperature required for sterilization in a prevacuum steam sterilizer?

A. 249-255

B. 263-269

C. 270-276

D. 256-262

The correct answer indicates that the minimum Fahrenheit temperature required for sterilization in a prevacuum steam sterilizer is between 270-276 degrees. This temperature range is critical because it ensures that all microorganisms, including bacterial spores, are effectively killed during the sterilization process. Prevacuum steam sterilizers operate by removing air from the chamber before introducing steam. This action enhances the penetration of steam and decreases the time required for sterilization. At temperatures of 270 degrees Fahrenheit and above, the steam's energy is sufficient to achieve the necessary lethality to ensure that all standard forms of microbial life are eradicated, which is crucial for maintaining the sterility of surgical instruments and other medical equipment. Other temperature ranges, while still relevant to sterilization processes, do not guarantee the same level of efficacy. Therefore, understanding the minimum heat threshold is essential for ensuring that sterilization protocols meet safety and effectiveness standards in surgical and medical settings.

4. How are rickettsiae transmitted?

A. Arthropod bites

B. Airborne organisms

C. Physical contact

D. Blood exposure

Rickettsiae are primarily transmitted through the bites of arthropods, particularly ticks, fleas, and lice. These pathogens are obligate intracellular parasites, meaning they require a host cell to grow and reproduce. When an arthropod bites an individual, it can introduce rickettsiae into the host's bloodstream, leading to infection. Understanding this transmission method is crucial for infection control and prevention practices, especially for healthcare workers and individuals in endemic areas. In contrast, airborne transmission involves pathogens expelled into the air and inhaled, which is not the case with rickettsiae. Physical contact can result in infection with other types of pathogens, but it is not a typical route for rickettsial transmission. Similarly, blood exposure can transmit various blood-borne pathogens, but for rickettsiae, the primary vector is the arthropod bite. Recognizing the specific transmission route helps in implementing appropriate measures to prevent rickettsial infections.

5. What muscle group relaxes when a small pad is placed under a patient's head in the supine position?

A. Cremaster

B. Deltoid

C. Strap

D. Pyramidal

When a small pad is placed under a patient's head in the supine position, it primarily helps to relax the strap muscles, which include the sternocleidomastoid and the infrahyoid muscles. These muscles are responsible for various movements of the neck and stabilize the hyoid bone. Providing support to the head in this position helps to align the cervical spine and reduces tension in the strap muscles, allowing them to relax more fully. In comparison, the other muscle groups listed have different anatomical roles and are less influenced by head positioning. The cremaster muscle is involved in the regulation of the testis temperature and is not affected by head position. The deltoid is primarily responsible for shoulder abduction and movement rather than neck positioning. The pyramidal muscle, found in the abdominal region, deals with tension in the rectus abdominis and is also not related to head support. Thus, the correct answer focuses on the relationship between head support and the relaxation of the strap muscles.

6. Which of the following structures is located in the alveolar processes?

A. Teeth

B. Sinuses

C. Tonsils

D. Villi

The alveolar processes are bony structures in the mouth that hold the teeth in place. They are a part of the jawbone and are crucial for dental health and function. The alveolar processes contain the sockets (alveoli) into which the roots of the teeth are anchored, providing stability and support. This anatomical feature is essential for proper occlusion and chewing. In contrast, the other options refer to different anatomical structures: the sinuses are air-filled spaces in the skull, tonsils are part of the lymphatic system located in the throat, and villi are tiny, finger-like projections in the intestines that enhance nutrient absorption. None of these are associated with the alveolar processes, making teeth the correct answer. Understanding the role of alveolar processes is important for those studying oral anatomy and surgical procedures related to dentistry.

7. What position is most commonly utilized for mitral valve replacement surgery?

A. Prone

B. Sims

C. Supine

D. Kraske

The supine position is the most commonly utilized position for mitral valve replacement surgery because it provides optimal access to the chest cavity. This position allows the surgical team to perform a median sternotomy effectively, facilitating access to the heart and the mitral valve itself. It also ensures that the patient's airway remains unobstructed and that they can be monitored easily throughout the procedure. In addition to optimizing the surgical approach, the supine position helps maintain proper hemodynamics and minimizes complications associated with other positioning methods. This positioning is crucial for anesthetic management as well, providing the necessary accessibility while ensuring patient safety throughout the surgery. Other positions, such as prone or Kraske, are not suitable for this type of surgery due to the anatomical requirements and the need for cardiovascular monitoring and access to the chest.

8. What is the minimum number of minutes to sterilize unwrapped metal instruments with lumens in the gravity displacement sterilizer at 270 degrees F?

A. 5

B. 10

C. 15

D. 20

The minimum time required to sterilize unwrapped metal instruments with lumens in a gravity displacement sterilizer at a temperature of 270 degrees Fahrenheit is 10 minutes. This time frame ensures that the steam has sufficient contact with all surfaces of the instruments, including inside lumens, to effectively kill any microbial life present. Sterilization at this temperature in a gravity displacement sterilizer relies on the principle of steam penetrating the items being sterilized, and a longer exposure time of 10 minutes helps to ensure that all parts, especially the inner surfaces of lumens, are adequately sterilized. This standard is consistent with guidelines provided by organizations such as the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Selecting the correct duration is vital for achieving sterilization while minimizing damage to the instruments from excessive heat exposure, which can occur with longer times or higher temperatures.

9. Which device is used to obtain specimens during a bronchoscopy?

A. Test tube

B. Suction container

C. Lukens tube

D. 4x4 Raytec sponges

During a bronchoscopy, a Lukens tube is specifically designed for obtaining and collecting specimens such as bronchial washes or biopsies. This device allows for the efficient collection of respiratory secretions or tissue samples directly from the airways, which can then be sent for further pathological analysis or cultures. The use of a Lukens tube is crucial as it ensures that specimens are collected and preserved properly to maintain their integrity for diagnostic testing. Its design facilitates the suctioning of bronchial secretions and allows for clear transport of these specimens without contamination. In contrast, while test tubes and suction containers serve important roles in laboratory settings and for general suctioning, they are not tailored for the specific needs of collecting specimens during a bronchoscopy. Raytec sponges are primarily used for hemostatic purposes and not suitable for specimen collection in this context.

10. What is the definition of otosclerosis?

A. Earache

B. Tinnitus

C. Tearing of tympanic membrane

D. Bony overgrowth of stapes

Otosclerosis is defined specifically as a bony overgrowth of the stapes, which is one of the small bones in the middle ear that plays a crucial role in hearing. This overgrowth can lead to a fixation of the stapes, resulting in conductive hearing loss as sound is unable to properly be transmitted from the middle ear to the inner ear. The condition is often hereditary and typically affects young adults, leading to progressive hearing issues. This differentiation from other ear-related ailments is important for understanding the pathology and potential treatment options for patients experiencing hearing loss.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

https://cst.examzify.com

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!