

PSI NBSTSA CERTIFIED SURGICAL TECHNOLOGIST (CST) PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE) STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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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

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- 1. Why are lab values significant in preoperative assessment?**
 - A. They help evaluate a patient's financial status
 - B. They help evaluate a patient's ability to undergo surgery and risks of complications
 - C. They provide insight into the surgical team's preferences
 - D. They identify the hospital's resource availability
- 2. What does the term "informed consent" mean in surgery?**
 - A. A document ensuring the patient has paid for the procedure
 - B. A process ensuring the patient understands the procedure and agrees to it voluntarily
 - C. A requirement for operating room access
 - D. A method of documenting surgical outcomes
- 3. Which system allows tumors in metastatic cancer to extend beyond their regional area?**
 - A. Skeletal
 - B. Lymphatic
 - C. Endocrine
 - D. Respiratory
- 4. How many lobes do the right and left lungs have, respectively?**
 - A. Three, two
 - B. Two, three
 - C. Three, three
 - D. Two, two
- 5. What is a retracting device used for in surgery?**
 - A. To cut tissues during a procedure.
 - B. To hold back tissues and organs to provide better visibility and access to the surgical site.
 - C. To measure blood loss during surgery.
 - D. To apply sutures securely.

- 6. What is the significance of reviewing a patient's medical history prior to surgery?**
- A. It helps to identify customer satisfaction
 - B. It helps identify any risks or complications associated with the patient's health
 - C. It determines the surgical team's experience level
 - D. It assesses the financial coverage of the procedure
- 7. What does hemostasis refer to in a surgical context?**
- A. The process of ensuring patient comfort during surgery
 - B. The process of stopping bleeding, essential to prevent excess blood loss during surgery
 - C. The process of maintaining surgical instruments
 - D. The process of providing anesthesia
- 8. For an open hemicolectomy, which instrument is MOST likely to be placed on a second mayo stand for dirty surgical instruments?**
- A. Penrose drain
 - B. Bakes dilator
 - C. Allis forceps
 - D. Richardson retractor
- 9. If a stapler received on the sterile field is not functioning properly, what should the surgical technologist do FIRST?**
- A. Report the issue to biomed.
 - B. Ask the circulator for another stapler.
 - C. Tell anesthesia the case will be delayed due to a device malfunction.
 - D. Inform the clinical director of the situation.
- 10. Why is it important for surgical technologists to stay current with advancements in surgical techniques?**
- A. To be able to criticize outdated methods
 - B. To ensure the highest level of patient care and safety
 - C. To impress the surgical team
 - D. To maintain employment

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Why are lab values significant in preoperative assessment?

- A. They help evaluate a patient's financial status
- B. They help evaluate a patient's ability to undergo surgery and risks of complications**
- C. They provide insight into the surgical team's preferences
- D. They identify the hospital's resource availability

Lab values hold significant importance during the preoperative assessment as they help evaluate a patient's overall health and ability to undergo surgery, alongside identifying potential risks for complications. These values provide crucial information about various bodily functions and systems, such as liver and kidney function, blood counts, electrolyte balance, and coagulation status. By analyzing lab values, healthcare providers can assess if a patient has any underlying conditions that may increase the risk of adverse events during or after surgery. For instance, abnormal blood levels could indicate issues with hemoglobin that may predispose a patient to excessive bleeding or impaired healing. This data helps the surgical team make informed decisions regarding the safety of proceeding with the surgery, as well as any necessary preoperative interventions that might be needed to optimize the patient's condition before the procedure.

2. What does the term "informed consent" mean in surgery?

- A. A document ensuring the patient has paid for the procedure
- B. A process ensuring the patient understands the procedure and agrees to it voluntarily**
- C. A requirement for operating room access
- D. A method of documenting surgical outcomes

The term "informed consent" in the context of surgery refers to the process by which a patient is educated about the specifics of a surgical procedure, including its risks, benefits, and alternatives, allowing them to make an informed decision regarding their care. This process emphasizes the patient's understanding and voluntary agreement to undergo the procedure, ensuring they are fully aware of what it entails before proceeding. Informed consent is a critical aspect of ethical medical practice, as it upholds a patient's autonomy and right to make choices regarding their own healthcare. It involves clear communication between the medical provider and the patient, often documented through a signed consent form. This not only protects the patient's rights but also serves to minimize potential legal issues that could arise from misunderstandings about the procedure. While other options suggest various forms of documentation or prerequisites, they do not capture the essence of informed consent, which fundamentally revolves around the patient's understanding and voluntary agreement rather than financial or procedural access issues.

3. Which system allows tumors in metastatic cancer to extend beyond their regional area?

- A. Skeletal
- B. Lymphatic**
- C. Endocrine
- D. Respiratory

The lymphatic system plays a crucial role in the spread of metastatic cancer because it is responsible for transporting lymph, a fluid containing immune cells, throughout the body. When cancer cells detach from the primary tumor, they can enter the lymphatic vessels and travel to nearby lymph nodes. This enables the cancer to extend beyond its initial regional area and potentially spread to distant sites in the body. The lymphatic system acts as a pathway for cancer cells, allowing them to disseminate and establish new tumors in other organs. In contrast, although the skeletal system can provide a site for cancer metastasis, it primarily serves as a structural framework and is not a direct pathway for the movement of cancer cells. The endocrine system involves hormone regulation and is less directly involved in the physical spread of tumors. The respiratory system relates to the exchange of gases and is not a primary facilitator of cancer cell migration compared to the lymphatic system. Thus, the lymphatic system is the most relevant choice when considering the extension of tumors in metastatic cancer.

4. How many lobes do the right and left lungs have, respectively?

- A. Three, two**
- B. Two, three
- C. Three, three
- D. Two, two

The right lung is divided into three lobes: the upper lobe, middle lobe, and lower lobe. This anatomical configuration allows for a larger capacity to accommodate the volume of air and facilitates breathing, given its slightly larger size compared to the left lung. In contrast, the left lung has two lobes: the upper lobe and the lower lobe. The left lung is smaller and has only two lobes to make room for the heart, which is located on the left side of the thoracic cavity. Understanding the number of lobes in each lung is crucial for various medical and surgical contexts, including providing care in respiratory conditions and performing thoracic surgeries.

5. What is a retracting device used for in surgery?

- A. To cut tissues during a procedure.
- B. To hold back tissues and organs to provide better visibility and access to the surgical site.**
- C. To measure blood loss during surgery.
- D. To apply sutures securely.

A retracting device is primarily used in surgery to hold back tissues and organs, creating a clear field of vision and improving access to the surgical site. This function is crucial during operations, as it allows the surgeon to see and work on the specific area of interest without obstruction from surrounding structures. By appropriately positioning tissues away from the surgical area, retractors enhance visibility and facilitate a more effective procedure, potentially leading to better outcomes. In contrast, cutting tissues is typically performed with surgical instruments designed for that purpose, such as scalpels or scissors, rather than retraction devices. Measuring blood loss is an entirely different function that involves monitoring devices or suction apparatus, not retraction tools. Additionally, applying sutures securely is accomplished with needle holders or other suturing instruments, further distinguishing the role of retractors in contrast to these different surgical tasks.

6. What is the significance of reviewing a patient's medical history prior to surgery?

- A. It helps to identify customer satisfaction
- B. It helps identify any risks or complications associated with the patient's health**
- C. It determines the surgical team's experience level
- D. It assesses the financial coverage of the procedure

Reviewing a patient's medical history prior to surgery is crucial as it helps identify any risks or complications associated with the patient's health. This process allows the surgical team to evaluate pre-existing conditions, medication interactions, allergies, and other relevant factors that could influence the patient's response to anesthesia or the surgical procedure itself. By understanding these risks, the healthcare team can develop an appropriate surgical plan, implement necessary precautions, and make informed decisions to enhance patient safety and optimize surgical outcomes. Assessing customer satisfaction, the surgical team's experience level, or financial coverage, while important aspects of overall patient care and healthcare management, do not directly address the immediate health concerns and potential complications that a thorough review of medical history aims to highlight. The focus is on ensuring that the patient's health information is fully understood to mitigate risks during the surgical process.

7. What does hemostasis refer to in a surgical context?

- A. The process of ensuring patient comfort during surgery
- B. The process of stopping bleeding, essential to prevent excess blood loss during surgery**
- C. The process of maintaining surgical instruments
- D. The process of providing anesthesia

In a surgical context, hemostasis specifically refers to the process of stopping bleeding. This is crucial during surgical procedures to prevent excessive blood loss, which can lead to complications such as shock and organ failure. Hemostasis is achieved through various techniques, including the application of pressure, the use of hemostatic agents, or surgical methods such as cauterization or ligation of blood vessels. Maintaining hemostasis is one of the critical responsibilities of the surgical team, as it directly affects the patient's safety and the overall success of the surgery. While patient comfort, surgical instrument maintenance, and anesthesia are important aspects of the surgical process, they do not define hemostasis. Understanding this term is vital for surgical technologists, as they play a key role in monitoring and facilitating techniques that ensure effective bleeding control throughout an operation.

8. For an open hemicolectomy, which instrument is MOST likely to be placed on a second mayo stand for dirty surgical instruments?

- A. Penrose drain
- B. Bakes dilator
- C. Allis forceps**
- D. Richardson retractor

In the context of an open hemicolectomy, the Allis forceps are commonly placed on a second mayo stand designated for dirty instruments. This is because Allis forceps are used for grasping and holding tissue during the procedure, often encountering moist and contaminated areas within the surgical field. After their use, they would typically be considered soiled and thus require a separate place for dirty instruments to maintain organization and prevent cross-contamination with sterile items. In surgical procedures, managing instrument handling and organization is vital in maintaining a sterile environment. The other instruments mentioned, such as the Penrose drain, Bakes dilator, and Richardson retractor, are not typically associated with being placed on a designated dirty instrument stand in the same context. The Penrose drain often serves as a way to facilitate drainage and may not be returned back to the mayo stand post-use. Bakes dilators are used during the procedure but can often be cleaned for reuse in subsequent cases, thereby not being designated as dirty. Richardson retractors are usually handled in a way that allows frequent sterile handling to provide exposure in the surgical field. Thus, the Allis forceps align most closely with the controlled organization of dirty surgical instruments during this type of procedure.

9. If a stapler received on the sterile field is not functioning properly, what should the surgical technologist do FIRST?

- A. Report the issue to biomed.
- B. Ask the circulator for another stapler.**
- C. Tell anesthesia the case will be delayed due to a device malfunction.
- D. Inform the clinical director of the situation.

When a stapler received on the sterile field is not functioning properly, it is critical for the surgical technologist to immediately address the need for a functional device to maintain the efficiency and safety of the surgical procedure. The first action should be to request another stapler from the circulator. This step ensures that the surgical team receives a reliable instrument without delaying the surgery, allowing the procedure to proceed smoothly with minimal interruption. The emphasis is on minimizing delays and ensuring patient safety during surgery. By obtaining a replacement stapler promptly, the surgical technologist can focus on maintaining the sterile field and continue assisting the surgical team effectively. This approach prioritizes immediate resolution of the issue to keep the surgical workflow on track.

10. Why is it important for surgical technologists to stay current with advancements in surgical techniques?

- A. To be able to criticize outdated methods
- B. To ensure the highest level of patient care and safety**
- C. To impress the surgical team
- D. To maintain employment

Staying current with advancements in surgical techniques is vital for surgical technologists primarily to ensure the highest level of patient care and safety. As medical technology and surgical methodologies evolve, so do the standards of care and the protocols that safeguard patient well-being during procedures. By being knowledgeable about the latest techniques, surgical technologists can facilitate better outcomes, reduce complications, and enhance the overall efficiency of surgical operations. Such awareness allows surgical technologists to contribute effectively during procedures by anticipating the needs of the surgical team and making informed decisions that align with the current best practices. Furthermore, understanding contemporary techniques can help identify potential gaps in care and enable a proactive approach to patient safety. While other considerations, such as impressing the surgical team or maintaining employment, may be relevant to one's career development, they do not directly contribute to the primary goal of enhancing patient care and ensuring safety, which is the foremost responsibility of healthcare professionals.

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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://psinbtsacst.examzify.com>

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

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