PREMIER medical group

Administrative
Policies and Procedures

Originating Venue: Infection Control
Title: Biological Testing of Autoclave Units
Date Issued: 11/14
Date Reviewed: 12/14
Date: Revised: 12/14
Attachment: None

Policy No.: IC 2334
Cross Reference:

Purpose:

To evaluate the function of the autoclave (heat and pressure) by testing its ability to destroy spores which are the organisms most resistant to destruction by autoclaving and to describe the requirements for spore testing and the procedure for handling a positive spore test result.

Policy:

Biological Indicator (BI) autoclave testing for spores will be performed once per 24 hour use of each steam sterilizer or weekly, depending upon procedure schedule of the site.

Procedure:

Biological control testing challenges the sterilization cycle with live, highly resistant, nonpathogenic spores. If spores are killed during processing, it is assumed that all other microorganisms are also killed and that the load is sterile.
Steam sterilizers will be maintained according to manufacturer's guidelines and the PMG policies. A dated sticker on the autoclave or a service receipt is acceptable documentation of appropriate maintenance.

Instructions for Use:

1. Remove biological test strip from the HealthLink Biological Envelope. Record lot number, expiration date, sterilizer serial #, and date of test on the envelope to be mailed to HealthLink Laboratories and in the Steam Sterilizer Record Form
2. Place the BI in the sterilizer to be monitored
3. Run sterilizer as per manufacturers guidelines
4. After cooling to room temperature, remove BI and place in envelope and mail to appropriate address.

In the event a spore test result demonstrates that the spores were not destroyed by autoclaving (test is positive):

1. Report the problem
2. Retest the autoclave
3. If test remains positive maintenance/repair is requested
4. All instruments sterilized during the positive spore test time frame are retrieved, this includes all instruments sterilized since the last negative spore test.
5. Retest the autoclave to confirm a negative result
6. Re-sterilize all retrieved instruments

Documentation:

1. Date of test
2. Test results
3. Type of BI used
4. Person performing/documenting results
5. Actions taken for positive spore test

Date Policy to be reviewed: 11/15