# 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.

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# 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!

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# Questions

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**1. A surgical "time out" must be performed prior to which event?**

A. Leaving the pre-op holding area

B. Making the initial incision

C. Placing the grounding pad

D. Intubating the patient

**2. What is the consequence of not using a laser-specific endotracheal tube during laser surgery?**

A. Increased risk of airway obstruction

B. Potential for airway fires

C. Delayed recovery time

D. Reduced surgical visibility

**3. A surgeon requests a patient to be placed into the lithotomy position for the surgical procedure. Which of the following positioning devices must be obtained?**

A. leg stirrups

B. chest rolls

C. bean bags

D. axillary rolls

**4. What is the importance of maintaining a sterile field during surgery?**

A. To facilitate faster surgery completion

B. To prevent infection and ensure patient safety

C. To allow easy access to instruments

D. To minimize the need for anesthetic

**5. Prior to the closure of an arteriotomy, which of the following solutions should the surgical technologist have ready for irrigation of the operative site?**

A. lactated Ringer's

B. protamine sulfate

C. sterile water

D. heparinized saline

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**6. Immediately before a hemorrhoidectomy, which of the following procedures might be performed on the patient in the OR?**

A. cystoscopy

B. culdoscopy

C. proctoscopy

D. laparoscopy

**7. What factor is associated with an increased risk of Surgical Site Infection (SSI)?**

A. wearing proper PPE

B. using aseptic technique

C. immunosuppression

D. portal hypertension

**8. Which of the following items should be disposed of in an appropriate sharps container?**

A. skin rake

B. drill pin

C. damaged instrument

D. arthroscopy trocar

**9. Which of the following instruments is used to cross-clamp the intestine during a bowel resection?**

A. Allen

B. Lahey

C. Heaney

D. Duval

**10. A patient is in the supine position for a procedure. Padding is placed under the elbows to decrease pressure on which nerve?**

A. brachial

B. ulnar

C. axillary

D. median

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# Answers

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

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# Explanations

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## 1. A surgical "time out" must be performed prior to which event?

A. Leaving the pre-op holding area

B. Making the initial incision

C. Placing the grounding pad

D. Intubating the patient

*The surgical "time out" is a critical safety procedure that occurs just before the initial incision is made during a surgical procedure. This practice is in place to ensure the safety of the patient and to confirm that the correct patient is undergoing the correct procedure on the correct site. The team involved in the surgery, including surgeons, nurses, and anesthetists, will come together to verify important details such as the patient's identity, the planned procedure, and any potential allergies. Conducting the "time out" at this stage allows any discrepancies or issues to be addressed before the operation begins, thereby minimizing the risk of errors. Performing a "time out" before other events, such as leaving the pre-op holding area or before intubation, does not encompass the complete alignment of all team members regarding the surgical specifics that directly affect the procedure commencement. While these other events are important in their own rights, they do not carry the same level of potential risk as beginning the surgery itself, which is why it is critical to ensure everything is confirmed before the initial incision is made.*

## 2. What is the consequence of not using a laser-specific endotracheal tube during laser surgery?

A. Increased risk of airway obstruction

B. Potential for airway fires

C. Delayed recovery time

D. Reduced surgical visibility

*During laser surgery, particularly in procedures involving the airway, the use of a laser-specific endotracheal tube is critical to prevent airway fires. Laser beams can ignite various materials, and regular endotracheal tubes are typically made of materials that are not fire-resistant. A laser-specific tube is designed to withstand the heat generated by the laser, thereby minimizing the risk of ignition and subsequent airway fires. Using an inappropriate endotracheal tube can lead to catastrophic consequences, including serious burns or injuries to the patient's airway, which could compromise the airway and overall safety during surgery. In contrast, the other options, while related to potential complications in surgery, do not specifically address the unique risk posed by the use of lasers, making the inability to prevent airway fires the most pertinent consequence of not using a laser-specific endotracheal tube.*

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**3. A surgeon requests a patient to be placed into the lithotomy position for the surgical procedure. Which of the following positioning devices must be obtained?**

A. leg stirrups

B. chest rolls

C. bean bags

D. axillary rolls

*The lithotomy position is commonly used for a variety of surgical procedures, particularly those involving the pelvic region. In this position, the patient lies on their back with their legs raised and supported, usually with the knees bent. Leg stirrups are specifically designed to support the patient's legs in this position, allowing for optimal surgical access while ensuring the safety and comfort of the patient. Using leg stirrups helps stabilize the lower limbs and maintains proper alignment to avoid potential complications such as nerve compression or tissue injury. This is crucial during surgical procedures where the surgical field requires clear access to the perineal area. Other devices like chest rolls, bean bags, and axillary rolls are used for different positioning needs. Chest rolls are typically used to support the thoracic area and prevent pressure on the chest during procedures in the prone position. Bean bags provide support and stabilization for patients in various positions but are not specific to the lithotomy position. Axillary rolls are used to relieve pressure on the axillae for patients in the lateral position. Thus, the leg stirrups are the appropriate and necessary device when placing a patient in the lithotomy position.*

**4. What is the importance of maintaining a sterile field during surgery?**

A. To facilitate faster surgery completion

B. To prevent infection and ensure patient safety

C. To allow easy access to instruments

D. To minimize the need for anesthetic

*Maintaining a sterile field during surgery is crucial primarily to prevent infection and ensure patient safety. A sterile field minimizes the risk of introducing pathogens into the surgical site, which can lead to postoperative infections—a significant complication that can affect recovery and overall outcomes. By establishing and maintaining sterility, surgical teams can safeguard the patient's health and preserve the integrity of the surgical procedure. While facilitating faster surgery completion, allowing easy access to instruments, and minimizing the need for anesthetic may seem relevant to surgery, they do not directly address the critical aspect of infection control. The primary goal of a sterile field is to create a safe environment where infections are kept at bay, thereby prioritizing patient well-being above all other considerations. This understanding reinforces the importance of stringent sterile techniques throughout the surgical process.*

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## 5. Prior to the closure of an arteriotomy, which of the following solutions should the surgical technologist have ready for irrigation of the operative site?

A. lactated Ringer's

B. protamine sulfate

C. sterile water

D. heparinized saline

*In the context of closing an arteriotomy, having heparinized saline ready for irrigation is essential. Heparinized saline serves multiple purposes: it helps to keep the surgical site well-lubricated, prevents the formation of blood clots in the area being operated on, and maintains vascular patency by providing some degree of anticoagulation. This is particularly important in the context of arteriotomies, where blood vessels are involved, and there is an increased risk of thrombosis. Lactated Ringer's solution is typically used for fluid resuscitation and electrolyte replacement, not specifically for irrigation during vascular procedures. Protamine sulfate is an antidote to heparin, and its role comes after administering heparin rather than during the procedure. Sterile water can potentially damage tissues and should not be used for irrigation in this context, as it lacks the necessary electrolytes and does not perform the anticoagulation function required post-operatively. Therefore, heparinized saline is the most appropriate choice prior to the closure of an arteriotomy, as it aligns with the need to manage vascular integrity and ensure optimal surgical outcomes.*

## 6. Immediately before a hemorrhoidectomy, which of the following procedures might be performed on the patient in the OR?

A. cystoscopy

B. culdoscopy

C. proctoscopy

D. laparoscopy

*Prior to a hemorrhoidectomy, performing a proctoscopy is relevant for evaluating the area around the rectum and anus. This procedure allows the surgeon to visualize the rectal canal and assess for any other potential abnormalities such as polyps, tumors, or other forms of disease that might be present before proceeding with the hemorrhoidectomy. By using a proctoscope, which is specifically designed for this area, the surgical team can ensure that the procedure is addressing the correct issue and can plan accordingly. The other procedures mentioned, while they may be useful in different contexts, do not pertain directly to the evaluation of the rectal region for hemorrhoid surgeries. A cystoscopy focuses on the bladder and the urethra, a culdoscopy examines the female pelvic organs, and laparoscopy allows viewing of the abdominal cavity. Each of these has its own specific indications and is not as directly relevant to a hemorrhoidectomy as proctoscopy.*

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## 7. What factor is associated with an increased risk of Surgical Site Infection (SSI)?

A. wearing proper PPE

B. using aseptic technique

C. immunosuppression

D. portal hypertension

*Immunosuppression is associated with an increased risk of Surgical Site Infection (SSI) due to its effect on the immune system. When a patient is immunosuppressed, whether due to a medical condition such as HIV/AIDS, cancer treatments, or the long-term use of immunosuppressive medications, their body's ability to fight off infections is significantly diminished. As a result, even a small number of bacteria that enter the surgical site during or after a procedure can lead to an infection, as the immune response is weakened. In contrast, wearing proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and using aseptic techniques are critical measures designed to prevent SSIs, reducing the likelihood of contaminants entering the surgical site. Similarly, while portal hypertension can have various health implications, it does not directly impact the body's immune response in the same way immunosuppression does. Thus, immunosuppression stands out as a key factor contributing to a higher risk of SSIs.*

## 8. Which of the following items should be disposed of in an appropriate sharps container?

A. skin rake

B. drill pin

C. damaged instrument

D. arthroscopy trocar

*The correct response identifies a drill pin as an item that should be disposed of in an appropriate sharps container. This is because a drill pin is typically made of metal and has a sharp, pointed end that poses a risk of puncture or injury to healthcare workers and others who may handle it. Sharps containers are specifically designed to contain sharp objects safely to prevent accidental injury and ensure safe disposal of hazardous waste. In a surgical setting, proper disposal of sharp instruments is critical to maintaining a safe environment and adhering to standard protocols. A sharps container allows for the secure storage and disposal of these items to minimize the risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens and other infectious materials. In contrast, items such as a skin rake, a damaged instrument, or an arthroscopy trocar would not typically qualify for disposal in a sharps container. A skin rake is generally a tool used in dermatological procedures that may not have sharp edges requiring special disposal. A damaged instrument could be disposed of according to the facility's protocol for non-sharp instruments, and an arthroscopy trocar, while it may be sharp, is usually considered a specialized instrument that has different disposal protocols.*

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## 9. Which of the following instruments is used to cross-clamp the intestine during a bowel resection?

A. Allen

B. Lahey

C. Heaney

D. Duval

*The instrument used to cross-clamp the intestine during a bowel resection is the Allen clamp. This surgical tool is specifically designed for this purpose, facilitating the occlusion of the bowel lumen while minimizing trauma to surrounding tissues. The design of the Allen clamp allows for a secure grip and effective control over the segment of the intestine being clamped, which is essential in managing bowel resections and subsequently performing anastomoses or removing the affected segment of the bowel. Understanding the function and application of different clamps can help in recognizing the specific roles surgical instruments play in various procedures, contributing to improved patient outcomes. In bowel resections, an effective cross-clamping technique is critical for preventing spillage of intestinal contents, ensuring cleaner surgical techniques and better healing of the remaining bowel.*

## 10. A patient is in the supine position for a procedure. Padding is placed under the elbows to decrease pressure on which nerve?

A. brachial

B. ulnar

C. axillary

D. median

*Padding is placed under the elbows in the supine position primarily to decrease pressure on the ulnar nerve. The ulnar nerve runs along the inner aspect of the elbow and is susceptible to compression when there is significant pressure or prolonged resting on the area. When a patient is positioned supine, especially during surgeries that may require extended time, ensuring that there is adequate padding under the elbows helps to distribute pressure evenly and prevent nerve injury. Maintaining awareness of the position of the patient's limbs and the use of padding is critical in surgical settings to afford protection against nerve damage. Proper positioning and padding are vital for enhancing patient comfort and preventing postoperative complications such as neuropraxia, which occurs when nerves are compressed or stretched. Though other nerves, such as the brachial, axillary, and median nerves, are important to consider in terms of upper extremity positioning, the ulnar nerve is most closely associated with the location where padding is applied under the elbows in this context.*

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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://psinbstsacst.examzify.com

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

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