

## **Biological Indicators (spore testing) in the Dental Office**

"Biological indicators (BIs) (i.e., spore tests) are the most accepted method for monitoring the sterilization process (278,279) because they assess it directly by killing known highly resistant microorganisms (e.g., *Geobacillus* or *Bacillus* species), rather than merely testing the physical and chemical conditions necessary for sterilization (243). Because spores used in BIs are more resistant and present in greater numbers than the common microbial contaminants found on patient-care equipment, an inactivated BI indicates other potential pathogens in the load have been killed (280).

Correct functioning of sterilization cycles should be verified for each sterilizer by the periodic use (at least weekly) of BIs (2, 9, 134, 243, 278, 279). Every load containing implantable devices should be monitored with such indicators (248), and the items quarantined until BI results are known. However, in an emergency, placing implantable items in quarantine until spore tests are known to be negative might be impossible.

Manufacturer's directions should determine the placement and location of BI in the sterilizer. A control BI, from the same lot as the test indicator and not processed through the sterilizer, should be incubated with the test BI; the control BI should yield positive results for bacterial growth. "

Taken from : <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5217a1.htm>