

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Over-Exposed and Over-Incubated BI Colors

SGM EZTest[®] BIs contain biological spores and growth media. The growth media contains nutrients and other growth-promoting ingredients. These ingredients can be overcooked if steam exposure is very hot or if it is an extended exposure. Temperatures in excess of 134°C and exposure times in excess of 4 minutes can cause the growth media to “caramelize”. Caramelization will create a brown color much like the color of cooked sugar, or caramel. The addition of this brown color can make the initial purple color appear slightly brownish, approximately the color of bourbon. Additional exposure can create even more of a light brown tinge.



This brown color should not be considered a FAIL result. The yellow color achieved with an actual FAIL is bright and un-mistakable. The brown tinge can be seen, in most cases, before the EZTest is incubated. If it is brown when it goes into the incubator and brown when it comes out, this is not a FAIL result. The FAIL result will be the same color as the positive control, a bright yellow.

It is also possible to obtain a light brown color if the EZTest is incubated at a temperature that is too high or if it is incubated too long. In most cases, the growth media will evaporate away and cause the ingredients to be concentrated in the residue that remains. When the indicator is a PASS and incubation time is too long or temperature is too hot, this concentrated residue can be slightly brownish. Again, this is not to be considered a FAIL result. The concentrated residue from an actual FAIL result is yellow.

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Over-cooked growth media still functions quite well. EZTest growth media still functions normally and gives a good bright yellow result when spores actually grow in it. A technical report is available.

So, the key to interpreting this product is to look for bright yellow. If bright yellow is not seen, the result is a PASS.

In this day and age, sterilizer cycles can vary from hospital to hospital and from type of load to type of load. Extended sterilization times and higher sterilization temperatures are becoming more and more common. SGM EZTest is a fine biological indicator that is appropriate for use in all of these various cycle types. A little care in interpretation is all that is necessary to eliminate any possible confusion about the correct color to be obtained in aggressive cycles.

Remember...bright yellow is the only FAIL result. Light brown or purple is a PASS. A wall chart showing the colors of growth media and the report on functionality of media that has experienced extended exposure is available by email request to: info@steritecproducts.com. Ask for SGM BI color wall chart or SGM Browning media study.

The logo for SteriTec features the word "SteriTec" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The "S" is significantly larger and more prominent than the other letters. The "T" is also large and has a distinctive shape. The "E" is smaller and more standard. The "C" is also smaller and has a slight curve. The entire logo is underlined with a thick black line.

74 Inverness Drive East Englewood, CO 80112 (303) 660-4201
www.steritecproducts.com