

Procedure Skills

Certification for independent practice requires a certain level of experiential competence: this includes the technical skills to perform a certain number of procedures. Sixty-five core procedures are listed below, and these are the procedures upon which the assessment of competence will be based⁸. It should be remembered that it is not only the technical aspects of the individual procedures that are important. The higher levels of competence must also be assessed, as always, in the context of family medicine—the key features describe this aspect.

The General Key Features of Procedure Skills*

1. In order to decide whether or not you are going to do a procedure, consider the following:
 - a) The indications and contraindications to the procedure
 - b) Your own skills and readiness to do the procedure (e.g., your level of fatigue and any personal distractions)
 - c) The context of the procedure, including the patient involved, the complexity of the task, the time needed, the need for assistance, and location
2. Before deciding to go ahead with the procedure:
 - a) Discuss the procedure with the patient, including a description of the procedure and possible outcomes, both positive and negative, as part of obtaining their consent.
 - b) Prepare for the procedure by ensuring the appropriate equipment is ready.
 - c) Mentally rehearse the following:
 - The anatomic landmarks necessary for procedure performance.
 - The technical steps necessary in sequential fashion, including any preliminary examination.
 - The potential complications and their management.
3. During performance of the procedure:
 - Keep the patient informed to reduce anxiety.
 - Ensure patient comfort and safety always.
4. When the procedure is not going as expected, re-evaluate the situation, and stop and/or seek assistance as required.
5. Develop a plan with your patient for after care and follow-up after completion of a procedure.

* Apply to all procedures. These can be used to guide the development of specific evaluation tools for specific procedures.

^{8 8} Wetmore SW, Rivet C, Tepper J, Tatemichi S, Donoff M, Rainsberry P. Defining core procedure skills for Canadian family medicine training. *Can Fam Physician*. 2005; 51(10): 1364-5.

Core Procedures

Integumentary Procedures

Abscess incision and drainage
Wound debridement
Insertion of sutures; simple, mattress, and subcuticular
Laceration repair; suture and gluing
Skin biopsy; shave, punch, and excisional
Excision of dermal lesions, e.g., papilloma, nevus, or cyst
Cryotherapy of skin lesions
Electrocautery of skin lesions
Skin scraping for fungus determination
Use of Wood's lamp
Release subungual hematoma
Drainage acute paronychia
Partial toenail removal
Wedge excision for ingrown toenail
Removal of foreign body, e.g., fish hook, splinter, or glass
Pare skin callus

Local Anesthetic Procedures

Infiltration of local anesthetic
Digital block in finger or toe

Eye Procedures

Instillation of fluorescein
Slit lamp examination
Removal of corneal or conjunctival foreign body
Application of eye patch

Ear Procedures

Removal of cerumen
Removal of foreign body

Nose Procedures

Removal of foreign body
Cautery for anterior epistaxis
Anterior nasal packing

Gastrointestinal Procedures

Nasogastric tube insertion
Fecal occult blood testing
Anoscopy/proctoscopy
Incise and drain thrombosed external hemorrhoid

Genitourinary and Women's Health Procedures

Placement of transurethral catheter
Cryotherapy or chemical therapy genital warts
Aspirate breast cyst
Pap smear
Diaphragm fitting and insertion
Insertion of intrauterine device
Endometrial aspiration biopsy

Obstetrical Procedures

Normal vaginal delivery
Episiotomy and repair
Artificial rupture of membranes

Musculoskeletal Procedures

Splinting of injured extremities
Application of sling—upper extremity
Reduction of dislocated finger
Reduce dislocated radial head (pulled elbow)
Reduce dislocated shoulder
Application of forearm cast
Application of ulnar gutter splint
Application of scaphoid cast
Application of below-knee cast
Aspiration and injection, knee joint
Aspiration and injection, shoulder joint
Injection of lateral epicondyle (tennis elbow)
Aspiration and injection of bursae, e.g., patellar, subacromial

Resuscitation Procedures

Oral airway insertion
Bag-and-mask ventilation
Endotracheal intubation
Cardiac defibrillation

Injections and Cannulations

Intramuscular injection
Subcutaneous injection
Intradermal injection
Venipuncture
Peripheral intravenous line; adult and child
Peripheral venous access—infant
Adult lumbar puncture