



Standard Test Method for Strength Properties of Tissue Adhesives in T-Peel by Tension Loading¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation F2256; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This test method is intended to provide a means for comparison of the adhesive strengths of tissue adhesives intended for use as surgical adhesives or sealants, or both, on soft tissue. With the appropriate choice of substrate, it may also be used for purposes of quality control in the manufacture of tissue adhesive based medical devices.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

1.3 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

[D907 Terminology of Adhesives](#)

[E4 Practices for Force Verification of Testing Machines](#)

2.2 *American Association of Tissue Banks Standards:*³
[Standards for Tissue Banking](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Many terms in this test method are defined in Terminology [D907](#).

3.2 *Definitions:*

3.2.1 *flexible*—as used in this test method, indicates that the adherends shall have such dimensions and physical properties as to permit bending them through any angle up to 90° without breaking or cracking.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F04 on Medical and Surgical Materials and Devices and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F04.15 on Material Test Methods.

Current edition approved May 1, 2015. Published July 2015. Originally approved in 2003. Last previous edition approved in 2010 as F2256 – 05 (2010). DOI: 10.1520/F2256-05R15.

² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ Available from the American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB), 1350 Beverly Rd., Suite 220-A, McLean, VA 22101.

3.2.2 *tissue adhesive*—for the purposes of this test method, tissue adhesive is defined as a compound or system intended for use in closing wounds (surgical or traumatic) or for sealing against leakage of body fluids.

3.2.3 *tissue sealant*—a surface coating with adequate adhesive strength to prevent leakage of body fluids.

3.2.4 *T-peel strength*—the average load per unit width of bond line required to produce progressive separation of two bonded flexible adherends, under conditions designated in this method.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Materials and devices that function at least in part by adhering to living tissues are finding increasing use in surgical procedures either as adjuncts to sutures and staples, or as frank replacements for those devices in a wide variety of medical procedures. While the nature and magnitude of the forces involved varies greatly with indication and with patient specific circumstances, all uses involve to some extent the ability of the material to resist imposed mechanical forces. Therefore, the mechanical properties of the materials, and in particular the adhesive properties, are important parameters in evaluating their fitness for use. In addition, the mechanical properties of a given adhesive composition can provide a useful means of determining product consistency for quality control, or as a means for determining the effects of various surface treatments on the substrate prior to use of the device.

4.2 The complexity and variety of individual applications for tissue adhesive devices, even within a single indicated use (surgical procedure) is such that the results of a T-Peel test are not suitable for determining allowable design stresses without thorough analysis and understanding of the application and adhesive behaviors.

4.3 This test method may be used for comparing adhesives or bonding processes for susceptibility to fatigue and environmental changes, but such comparisons must be made with great caution since different adhesives may respond differently to varying conditions.

5. Apparatus

5.1 *Testing Machine*, of the constant-rate-of-crosshead-movement type and comprising essentially the following:

5.1.1 *Fixed Member*, a fixed or essentially stationary member carrying one grip.

5.1.2 *Movable Member*, a movable member carrying a second grip.

5.1.3 *Grips*, for holding the test specimen between the fixed member and the movable member of the testing machine can be either the fixed or self-aligning type.

5.1.3.1 *Fixed Grips* are rigidly attached to the fixed and movable members of the testing machine. When this type of grip is used extreme care should be taken to ensure that the test specimen is inserted and clamped so that the long axis of the test specimen coincides with the direction of pull through the centerline of the grip assembly.

5.1.3.2 *Self-Aligning Grips* are attached to the fixed and movable members of the testing machine in such a manner that they will move freely into alignment as soon as any load is applied so that the long axis of the test specimen will coincide with the direction of the applied pull through the center line of the grip assembly. The specimens should be aligned as perfectly as possible with the direction of pull so that no rotary motion that may induce slippage or damage to the sample will occur in the grips; there is a limit to the amount of misalignment self-aligning grips will accommodate.

5.1.4 *Drive Mechanism*, for imparting to the movable member a uniform, controlled velocity with respect to the stationary member, with this velocity to be regulated as specified in 9.3.

5.1.5 *Load Indicator*, a suitable load-indicating mechanism capable of showing the total tensile load carried by the test specimen when held by the grips. This mechanism shall be essentially free of inertia lag at the specified rate of testing and shall indicate the load with an accuracy of $\pm 1\%$ of the indicated value, or better. The accuracy of the testing machine shall be verified in accordance with Practices E4.

5.2 *Temperature-controlling Equipment*, capable of maintaining the test temperature to $\pm 2^\circ\text{C}$. If ambient laboratory conditions are employed the same degree of control is required. A water bath or environmental chamber capable of maintaining 37°C is required for testing on tissue substrates.

6. Test Substrate

6.1 For comparative testing, either fresh or frozen split thickness porcine skin graft may be used.

6.1.1 Frozen split thickness porcine skin that has been aseptically prepared is available commercially and is preferred due to ease of use and the potential for more consistent properties. It should be thawed according to the manufacturer's instructions prior to use. Unused graft may be kept at 2 to 8°C for up to two weeks after thawing.

6.1.2 If fresh skin is chosen, it should be prepared according to the method in Appendix X1.

6.2 *Application Specific Testing*—Due to the size of the T-Peel test specimens, many tissues will not be suitable for this test.

6.2.1 The strength of any adhesive is highly dependent on the test substrate, or adherend. For a specific application, the preferred substrate is freshly harvested tissue from the target organ of a domestic food animal. Tissue from bovine, porcine, or ovine origin is preferred due to wide availability and the fact

that relatively large samples of tissue can be harvested from a single source. Ideally, the tissue should be used within 24 h of harvest, and should be kept between 5 and 10°C prior to testing if it cannot be used immediately after harvesting. Storage and handling of tissue samples should be carried out according to the guidelines set forth in Standards for Tissue Banking by the American Association of Tissue Banks. The specimens should be brought to the test temperature or other prescribed temperature (such as body temperature) prior to application of the adhesive.

6.2.2 Fixed tissue should not be used since it has been demonstrated that fixatives cause large alterations in the mechanical properties of the tissue and it is probable that the adhesive strength would be affected as well.

6.2.3 If the target organ is of a size or geometry, or both, that does not allow fabrication of test samples as shown in Fig. 1, a tissue of similar origin but larger size should be used. For example, if the intended indication is for anastomosis of small blood vessels, a larger vessel should be substituted (see 6.2).

6.2.4 The thickness of the tissue sample should be minimized and should not exceed 5 mm. Thicker samples will lead to distortion of the substrate and mixed loading (shear and tension). It is also important that the thickness be as uniform as possible.

6.3 Substrates for Quality Control Testing:

6.3.1 For testing that is undertaken as part of a quality control process in the manufacturing of a tissue adhesive device, the use of freshly harvested tissue is highly inconvenient and may also lead to unacceptable variation in the test results, especially if the failure occurs in the adherend (substrate failure). Since the purpose of quality control testing is to demonstrate consistency in the device, substitution of a model substrate is preferred so long as it is demonstrated that the adhesive does bond to the adherend. Due to the nature of the

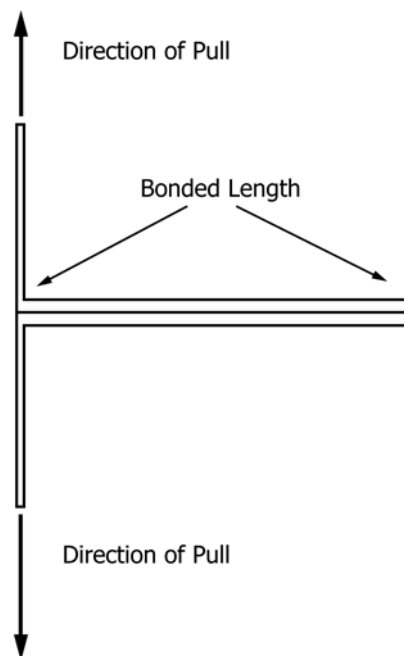


FIG. 1 T-Peel Sample Configuration (Side View)

T-Peel test, the substrate must be flexible and should have sufficient stiffness to minimize substrate distortion during the test.

6.3.2 For devices that require contact with tissues to cure, Mediskin XenoGraft should be used for quality control testing as well as comparative testing.

7. Test Specimen

7.1 The T-Peel test specimen is shown in [Fig. 1](#). Two substrate samples are required for each test.

7.1.1 A template of the correct dimensions should be used. A sharp scalpel or similar device should be used to cut the substrate material.

7.1.2 Specimen width should be 2.5 ± 0.1 cm.

7.1.3 Specimen length should be 15 ± 0.2 cm (2.5 cm unbonded, 12.5 cm bonded).

7.2 *Number of Test Specimens*—Test at least 10 specimens of each type. Tissue substrates tend to give higher variances and may require more samples to attain a reasonable estimate of the mean strength.

8. Sample Preparation

8.1 Tissue Preparation:

8.1.1 Tissue substrate materials should be kept moist at all times with phosphate buffered saline (PBS).

8.1.2 The substrate will be cut to the dimensions given in [Section 7](#) using a template and a fresh scalpel blade or a cutter fabricated to the required dimensions.

8.1.3 Wrap the tissue with gauze soaked in PBS, place in a plastic bag, and place them in a water bath or environmental chamber at 37°C.

8.2 Preparation of the Adhesive Bond:

8.2.1 Prepare the test adhesive according to the manufacturer's directions or by other prescribed procedure.

8.2.2 Remove the test fixtures from the plastic bag and pat the surface of the tissue dry with fresh gauze.

8.2.3 Apply sufficient adhesive to uniformly coat the overlap area without significant overflow. Excess adhesive could run over the edge of the substrate, causing artificially high test values. The amount required will have to be determined experimentally. For adhesives that are delivered with a spray device, controlling the amount and distribution of the material will be difficult. It may be necessary to use a template to prevent overspray. Alternatively, petroleum jelly may be applied to the portion of the tissue outside of the overlap area to prevent bonding.

8.2.4 Place the other non-glued adherend specimen on top of the glued specimen.

8.2.5 Apply a force of approximately 5 to 10 N to the bond area until the adhesive sets. For slow-curing adhesives it may be necessary to use a clamping device that can be left in place while the fixture is returned to the environmental chamber or water bath.

8.3 Measure and record the width and length of the adhesive bond to within 0.05 cm.

8.4 Re-cover the tissue with gauze soaked in PBS, replace the sample in a plastic bag, and return it to the constant temperature environment.

9. Test Procedure

9.1 Condition the test specimens for definite periods of time under specified, controlled conditions before testing if desired. For comparative testing, the conditioning time should be $1 \text{ h} \pm 15 \text{ min}$. Recommended conditions for tissue adhesives intended for internal applications are $37 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ in phosphate buffered saline. For adhesives intended for external topical use, recommended conditions are $30 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ and $50 \pm 5\%$ relative humidity. For quality control testing, the recommended conditions are $23 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$ and $50 \pm 5\%$ relative humidity.

9.2 After conditioning, it is recommended that all specimens be stabilized at the test temperature for 15 min before testing if the test temperature is different from the conditioning temperature. Tissue samples must be kept moist throughout the process to prevent shrinkage due to drying. For comparative testing the test conditions should be $23 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$ and $50 \pm 5\%$ relative humidity (see [Annex A1](#)).

9.3 Clamp the unbonded ends of the test specimen in the grips of the tensile test machine as shown in [Fig. 1](#). Load the specimen at a constant cross-head speed of 250 mm/min.

9.4 Record the load as a function of displacement, and the type of failure (percentage cohesive, adhesive, or substrate failure) based on observation of the bond area.

10. Calculations

10.1 For a bonded length of 12.5 cm, the displacement of the test grips will be approximately 25 cm. Ignore the load data for the first 2.5 cm of displacement, and calculate the average load between displacements of 2.5 cm and 22.5 cm.

10.2 Calculate the average T-Peel strength by dividing the average load in Newtons by the width of the specimen in centimetres.

10.3 Calculate the average and standard deviation for each group of samples.

11. Report

11.1 Report the following:

11.1.1 Complete identification of the adhesive tested, including type, source, date manufactured, manufacturer's code number, and lot number.

11.1.2 Complete identification of the substrate used, its thickness, and any method used to clean or prepare the surface prior to bonding.

11.1.3 Estimated amount of adhesive applied.

11.1.4 Method of adhesive application.

11.1.5 Ambient conditions at time of bonding (temperature, humidity, and so forth).

11.1.6 Average width of the specimen.

11.1.7 Conditioning of specimen prior to testing.

11.1.8 Maximum, minimum, mean, and standard deviation of the Peel strength for the group of specimens.

11.1.9 Number of specimens tested.

11.1.10 *Type of Failure*—This should include estimated percentages of cohesive failure in the adhesive, apparent failure in adhesion, and failure in the adherend (substrate) for each specimen.

11.1.11 Test temperature employed.

12. Precision and Bias

12.1 A precision and bias statement does not exist for this test method because round robin testing has not yet been performed.

13. Keywords

13.1 adhesive bond; peel test; T-peel; tissue adhesive

ANNEX

(Mandatory Information)

A1. RATIONALE FOR TESTING TEMPERATURE USED FOR COMPARATIVE TESTING

A1.1 As with all mechanical testing, the temperature can have a large effect on the results obtained using this procedure. Ideally, all of the testing will be carried out at the intended use temperature (37°C for internal applications). However, the equipment required for conducting elevated temperature tensile tests is not available in all laboratories. Furthermore, attempt-

ing to test samples immediately after removal from the conditioning bath would lead to unacceptable variation in sample temperature at the time of failure. Therefore it was decided to allow the samples to cool to room temperature for 15 to 20 min prior to testing to eliminate that source of variability.

APPENDIX

(Nonmandatory Information)

X1. PROCEDURE FOR PREPARATION OF FRESH SPLIT THICKNESS PORCINE SKIN GRAFT

NOTE X1.1—The consistency of porcine skin prepared according to this method has not yet been evaluated in comparative testing with commercially available frozen porcine skin. Inconsistencies in preparation are likely to increase the variability of the test results and require a larger number of samples to achieve statistically valid results.

X1.1 Materials

X1.1.1 Fresh pig skin procured bilaterally from the flanks of the pig.

X1.1.2 Isopropyl alcohol (70 %).

X1.1.3 #20 scalpel blades with handle.

X1.1.4 Dermatome.

X1.1.5 Microtome blades.

X1.1.6 Non-sterile gauze 4×4's.

X1.1.7 Four (4) non-sterile towels.

X1.1.8 Sterile normal saline warmed to 37°C. An antibiotic-antimycotic preparation such as those used for tissue culture should be added to the saline at 10× the recommended concentration.

X1.1.9 Two (2) petri dishes.

X1.1.10 Two (2) cutting boards.

X1.1.11 Needle holder.

X1.1.12 Spray bottle.

X1.1.13 Dermatome cutting board.

X1.1.14 Two (2), 4 penny nails.

X1.1.15 Mineral oil.

X1.1.16 Forceps.

X1.1.17 20 µL micro-pipette.

X1.2 Method for Preparation

X1.2.1 Fresh, shaved pig skin harvested bilaterally from the flanks of the pig is procured from a local source and transported to the research laboratory in a cooler on ice. Each piece of skin is approximately 6 in. wide and 18 in. long.

X1.2.2 The skin is removed from the cooler and the dermal surface is cleaned with alcohol and gauze, then placed epidermal side up on a cutting board.

X1.2.3 The pig skin is then cut in 4 strips 1.5 in. wide by 18 in. long using a number 20 scalpel blade. The four pieces are covered with a saline soaked surgical towel to inhibit dessication of the tissue.

X1.2.4 A non-sterile surgical towel is placed onto the laboratory countertop. Several gauze 4×4's are placed on top of the surgical towel and then moistened with normal saline using a spray bottle.

X1.2.5 One of the pig skin strips is placed epidermal side down on another cutting board and the underlying fat layer is excised using a microtome blade secured in a needle holder. The fat layer is removed to the level of dermis. Once this task is completed, the skin is immediately placed epidermal side down onto the saline soaked 4×4's and the dermal surface is then covered with 4×4's moistened with normal saline. The gauze 4×4's are covered with a non-sterile surgical towel. The towel is then moistened with normal saline using the spray bottle. The microtome blade is removed and discarded and a new blade is installed. The process is completed for the remaining three pieces of skin.

X1.2.6 Once the fat layer has been removed from each of the strips of pig skin, the cutting board is washed with mild soap and dried.

X1.2.7 One piece of pig skin is placed, dermal side down, on a specifically designed dermatome cutting board. The skin is secured with one nail at each end of the skin.

X1.2.8 A dermatome with a cutting blade set at a cutting depth of 0.13 mm is used to remove the epidermal layer of pig skin. A forceps is used to remove the harvested epidermal layer during the cutting process. Immediately after completing the excision of the epidermis, the nails are removed from the two ends of the skin and the skin is placed back onto the normal saline soaked 4×4's with the freshly harvested dermal side down. The skin is then covered with additional normal saline soaked 4×4's and covered with the normal saline moistened non-sterile surgical towel. The process is completed for the three remaining pieces of skin.

X1.2.9 The non-sterile towel and 4×4's covering the strips of skin are removed and the visible dermal layer of pig skin is wiped with a dry 4×4.

X1.2.10 The prepared skin is cut into strips of the appropriate size for the particular test being conducted.

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