

**Chest deformities:** An enlarged heart sometimes distorts the chest configuration.

**Unusual pulsations:** Visible pulsations of the neck veins are seen in some patients.

**Respiratory excursion:** This refers to the ease or difficulty of respiration (e.g., tachypnea, dyspnea, expiratory grunt).

**Clubbing of fingers:** This is associated with cyanosis.

**Palpation and Percussion**

**Chest:** These maneuvers help discern heart size and other characteristics (e.g., thrills) associated with heart disease.

**Abdomen:** Hepatomegaly or splenomegaly may be evident.

**Peripheral pulses:** Rate, regularity, and amplitude (strength) may reveal discrepancies.

**Auscultation**

**Heart rate and rhythm:** Listen for fast heart rates (tachycardia), slow heart rates (bradycardia), and irregular rhythms.

**Character of heart sounds:** Listen for distinct or muffled sounds, murmurs, and additional heart sounds.

**Diagnostic Evaluation**

A variety of invasive and noninvasive tests may be used in the diagnosis of heart disease (Table 23-1). Some of the more common diagnostic tools that require nursing assessment and intervention are described in the following sections.

**TABLE 23-1**  
**Procedures for Cardiac Diagnosis**

Procedure	Description
Chest radiography (x-	Provides information on heart size and pulmonary blood flow patterns