

temporales—make up the cranium. Between the junction of these bones are bands of connective tissue called **sutures**. At the junction of the sutures are wider spaces of unossified membranous tissue called **fontanels**. The two most prominent fontanels in infants are the anterior fontanel formed by the junction of the sagittal, coronal, and frontal sutures and the posterior fontanel formed by the junction of the sagittal and lambdoid sutures (Fig. 7-6, A).

Nursing Tip

The location of the sutures is easily remembered because the coronal suture “crowns” the head, and the sagittal suture “separates” the head.

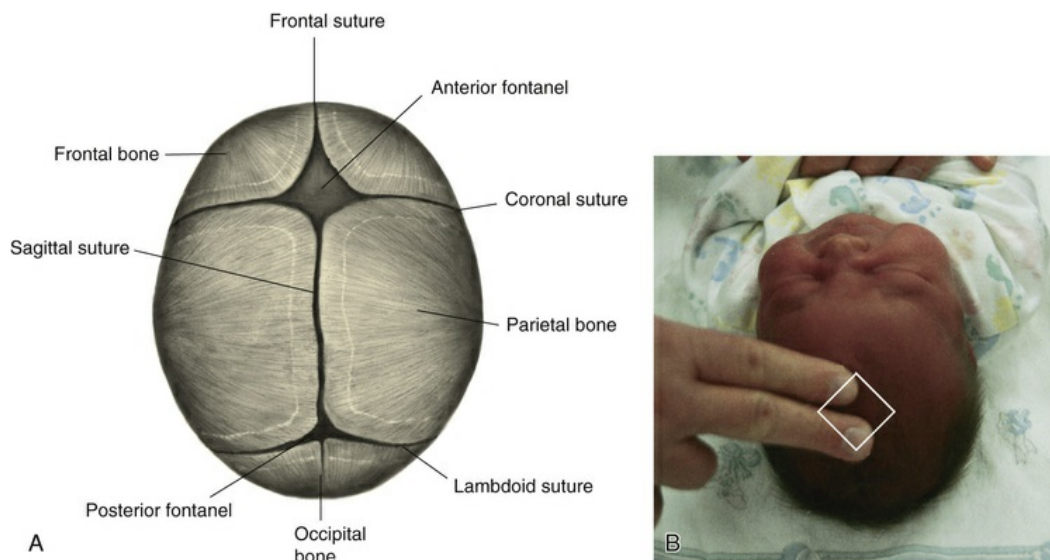


FIG 7-6 A, Location of sutures and fontanels. B, Palpating the anterior fontanel.

The skull is palpated for all patent sutures and fontanels, noting size, shape, molding, or abnormal closure. The sutures feel like cracks between the skull bones, and the fontanels feel like wider soft spots at the junction of the sutures. These are palpated by using the tip of the index finger and running it along the ends of the bones (see Fig. 7-6, B).

The anterior fontanel is diamond shaped and measures anywhere from barely palpable to 4 to 5 cm (≈ 2 inches) at its widest point (from bone to bone rather than from suture to suture). The posterior