



FIG 4-33 Location of pulses.

Use palpation to determine the location of the AI, the most lateral cardiac impulse that may correspond to the apex. The AI is found:

- At the fifth ICS and LMCL in children older than 7 years old
- At the fourth ICS and just lateral to the LMCL in children younger than 7 years old

Although the AI gives a general idea of the size of the heart (with enlargement, the apex is lower and more lateral), its normal location is variable, making it an unreliable indicator of heart size.

The **point of maximum intensity (PMI)**, as the name implies, is the area of most intense pulsation. Usually the PMI is located at the same site as the AI, but it can occur elsewhere. For this reason, the two terms should not be used synonymously.

Assess the **capillary refill time**, an important test for circulation and hydration, by pressing the skin lightly on a central site, such as the forehead, or a peripheral site, such as the top of the hand, to