

Inspect the **anterior vestibule** of the nose by pushing the tip upward, tilting the head backward, and illuminating the cavity with a flashlight or otoscope without the attached ear speculum. Note the color of the **mucosal lining**, which is normally redder than the oral membranes, as well as any swelling, discharge, dryness, or bleeding. There should be no discharge from the nose.

On looking deeper into the nose, inspect the **turbinates**, or **concha**, plates of bone that jut into the nasal cavity and are enveloped by the mucous membranes. The turbinates greatly increase the surface area of the nasal cavity as air is inhaled. The spaces or channels between the turbinates are called the **meatus** and correspond to each of the three turbinates. Normally, the front end of the inferior and middle turbinate and the middle meatus are seen. They should be the same color as the lining of the vestibule.

Inspect the **septum**, which should divide the vestibules equally. Note any deviation, especially if it causes an occlusion of one side of the nose. A perforation may be evident within the septum. If this is suspected, shine the light of the otoscope into one naris and look for admittance of light to the other. Because olfaction is an important function of the nose, testing for smell may be done at this point or as part of cranial nerve assessment (see [Table 4-11](#)).

Mouth and Throat

With a cooperative child, the nurse can accomplish almost the entire examination of the mouth and throat without the use of a tongue blade. Ask the child to open the mouth wide; to move the tongue in different directions for full visualization; and to say “ahh,” which depresses the tongue for full view of the back of the mouth (tonsils, uvula, and oropharynx). For a closer look at the **buccal mucosa**, or lining of the cheeks, ask children to use their fingers to move the outer lip and cheek to one side (see [Atraumatic Care](#) box).

Atraumatic Care

Encouraging Opening the Mouth for Examination

- Perform the examination in front of a mirror.