

ABDOMINAL EXAMINATION GUIDE

Please note these guides are not necessarily the curriculum taught at the medical schools. They are basic templates to assist in structuring bedside teaching, for stimulating thought about clinical findings and aiding constructive feedback back from junior doctors to medical students.

Instructions: Perform an abdominal examination

	Method	Observed/Comment
Introduction	Hand hygiene Seek consent to examine	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exposure and positioning	Chest and abdomen exposed. Supine, one pillow under head.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspection	General inspection; "GCS/AVPU, body habitus, cachexia, jaundice, skin lesions"	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hands	Nails – leukonychia, clubbing Palms – Erythema, anaemia, Duptyren's, Asterixis	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Upper limbs	Bruising/Petechiae Atrophy of muscles Scratch marks, injection marks Spider Naevi Lymphadenopathy of the axilla	<input type="checkbox"/>
Face	Eyes – scleral jaundice, conjunctival pallor, xanthalesma, periorbital purpura Glands – parotid and submandibular palpation Oral – Dentition, gingiva, fetor, tongue ("Geographic, glossitis, macroglossia"), ulcers (aphthous ulcers, angular stomatitis, candidiasis pigmentation of mucosal membranes)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Neck & chest	Spider naevi, gynaecomastia Palpate cervical and supraclavicular LNs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Abdomen	Inspect (eye level): Scars, distension, local swellings, hernia, veins, pulsations, visible peristalsis, skin lesions, striae, movement of the abdominal wall, stoma Palpate: Light palpation & deep palpation all regions, tender area last - note guarding, rigidity, rebound tenderness, palpate liver (radial edge of index finger), spleen, loin, lumbar areas, abdominal aorta Percuss: Borders of the liver, spleen, bladder, shifting dullness Auscultate: Bowel sounds, bruits (renal, abdominal aorta), friction rubs, venous hums	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Inguinal & scrotum	Inspect hernia orifices (standing), palpate inguinal lymph nodes and testes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rectal	Digital Rectal examination	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completion	Review vitals/fluid/bowel chart, BSL, urinalysis	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

