

Thyroid Examination

Introduction

- Wash your hands and wear PPE if appropriate.
- Introduce yourself to the patient, including your name and role.
- Confirm the patient's name and date of birth.
- Briefly explains what the examination will involve using patient-friendly language.
- Gain consent to proceed with the examination.
- The patient should be sitting over the edge of the bed or on a chair if not acutely ill.
- Expose the patient (Undress the patient's neck and upper chest) and ensure privacy.
- Ask if the patient has any pain before proceeding.

General Appearance

Appearance, Body built, Color, Distress, and Environment.

The hands (Clinical years)

Temperature (palms: dry or sweaty), palmar erythema, nail clubbing, leuconychia, koilonychia, fine tremor, radial pulse rate, rhythm, and volume.

Head and Eyes (Clinical years)

Alopecia or hair loss, dry skin, loss of the lateral third of the eyebrow,
Eye signs: Exophthalmos, Lid retraction, Lid lag, Ophthalmoplegia, Chemosis.

Lower limbs (Clinical years)

Pretibial myxedema, proximal myopathy, reflexes.

The neck

Inspection: Asymmetry, swelling or evident masses, scar, prominent veins, redness ask the patient to take a sip of water and inspect again (thyroid swellings move with swallowing); ask the patient to protrude his tongue (thyroglossal cyst moves).

Palpation:

Front: trachea position, carotid pulse, tenderness, and temperature of the thyroid gland.

Behind: anterior and posterior triangles of the neck with fingertips. Palpate the anterior neck (each side separately) for any mass (describe it), and ask him to take sips of water while palpating his thyroid gland and cervical lymph nodes.

Percussion: percuss downwards from the sternal notch (for retrosternal extension).

Auscultation: Over thyroid gland for evidence of bruit.

At the end of the examination

- Ensure patient comfort, cover and thank the patient.
- Provide explanations, address questions, and discuss the management plan with the patient.
- Dispose of waste material following infection control standards.
- Do not forget to wash your hands.

References: Browse's Introduction to the Symptoms & Signs of Surgical Disease 6th Edition & Macleod's Clinical Examination - 15th Edition

