

General Physical Examination Checklist

This general physical examination checklist has been adapted from guidelines set out by Bickley (2021). It is intended as a guide to medical professionals only and is not a scientifically validated diagnostic tool.

Prepare for examination: Ensure you have a comfortable, private space with adequate lighting. Check you have all the necessary equipment, including a stethoscope, thermometer and sphygmomanometer. Wash your hands in the patient's presence prior to the exam.

Patient information	
Name:	
Date of birth:	Patient ID number:
Examination date:	Assessed by:
Health history	
Current medications:	
Current medical conditions or symptoms:	
Family history of major health conditions:	
Vital signs	
Temperature:	Heart rate:
Respiratory rate:	Blood pressure:
Other (e.g. SPO2):	

Are the following normal without abnormal features? Please describe:

1. General appearance

Build, posture, motor activity, personal hygiene, manner and effect.

Yes	No	Not examined
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Comments:

2. Skin

Identify any lesions & note general condition and coloring.

Yes	No	Not examined
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Comments

3. Ear and nose

Inspect ear canals, auricles, and drums; nose, nasal mucosa, septum, turbinates and sinuses.

Yes	No	Not examined
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Comments:

4. Eyes

Inspect sclera, conjunctiva, cornea, iris, lens, pupil dilation visual acuity, visual fields.

Yes	No	Not examined
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Comments:

5. Mouth and throat

Inspect lips, oral mucosa, gums, teeth, tongue, palate, tonsils, pharynx.

Yes	No	Not examined
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Comments:

6. Speech

Speech ability, state of awareness

Yes	No	Not examined
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Comments:

7. Neck and back

Inspect hyoid gland, cervical lymph nodes, trachea, breathing. Inspect spine and back muscles.

Yes	No	Not examined
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Comments:

8. Chest, thorax and lungs

Inspect/listen to chest, breathing sounds, diaphragm.

Yes	No	Not examined
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Comments:

9. Breasts, axillae, epitrochlear nodes

Inspect breasts, axillary nodes and epitrochlear nodes. Identify any abnormalities.

Yes No Not examined

Comments:

10. Cardiovascular system

Inspect jugular venous pulsations and measure jugular venous pressure, inspect carotid pulsations. Listen to heart and at the apex.

Yes No Not examined

Comments

11. Abdomen and viscera

Inspect and palpate the abdomen. Check for hernia. Assess liver, spleen, aorta and kidneys.

Yes No Not examined

Comments:

12. Peripheral vascular system

Palpate femoral pulses, popliteal pulses, lymph nodes. Inspect for edema, discoloration, ulcers, varicose veins.

Yes No Not examined

Comments:

13. Lower extremities

Assess peripheral vascular, musculoskeletal and nervous systems. (Sitting and standing)

Yes No Not examined

Comments:

14. Nervous system

Mental status, memory and attention, cranial nerve e.g. smell, facial muscles, reflexes, coordination, gait

Yes No Not examined

Comments:

15. Genitals and rectal

Inspect penis and scrotal contents, sacrococcygeal and perianal areas/external genitalia, vagina, cervix, pap smear. Palpate the anal canal, rectum and prostate.

Yes No Not examined

Comments:

16. Other

Yes No Not examined

Comments:

Additional notes

Concluding the examination: Share general impressions and key results with the patient. Discuss any next steps, such as recommendations for lifestyle changes or referrals for further screenings or tests. Clean equipment, dispose of waste and wash your hands.

Bickley, L. S. (2021). Physical examination. In *Bates' Pocket Guide to Physical Examination and History Taking*, 9e. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

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