

Tools used in a Clinical Examination

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Observation from a Far

- **General condition**
 - Critically ill
 - Down
 - Thin
 - Obese
- **Mentation – *bright, alert, responsive***
- **Posture**
- **Gait**
- **Head position**
- **Respiration**
- **Discharge**
- **Obvious injuries or wounds**
- **Edema**
- **Jugular vein distention**



Collecting a Meaningful History

- **History is dependent on the case but the examiner should collect as much relevant information as possible**
- **Include standard questions to prevent tunnel vision**
 - Signalment
 - **Age**
 - **Breed**
 - **Gender**
 - Vaccination and anthelmintic history
 - Diet
 - Presenting complaint
 - **Description of signs**
 - **Duration of signs**
 - **Number of animals affected**
 - Interest in food and/or water
 - **Partial anorexia**
 - **Complete anorexia**
 - **Change in diet**
 - Weight loss
 - Recent calving
 - Reproductive status
 - Milk production
 - Manure and urine production
 - Cough
 - Discharge
 - Fever
 - Recent changes
 - **Food**
 - **Environment**
 - **New additions to the herd/flock**



Auscultation

- **Utilize stethoscope to:**
 - Cardiac auscultation
 - **Rate**
 - **Regularity**
 - **Murmurs**
 - **Intensity of sounds**
 - Respiratory auscultation
 - **Rate**
 - **Presence of sounds**
 - **Abnormal sounds**
 - Crackles
 - Wheezes
 - Large airway sounds
 - Absence of sounds
 - Gastrointestinal auscultation
 - **Rumen motility**
 - **Intestinal motility**



Percussion

- **Tapping an area and listening simultaneously with or without a stethoscope**
 - Head
 - **Sinuses**
 - Thorax
 - **Dull sounds**
 - Abdomen
 - **Areas of tympanic resonance – “ping”**
- What are seven sources of a “ping” upon simultaneous auscultation and percussion?



Palpation

- **Palpation can be extremely useful:**
 - Musculoskeletal system
 - **Swelling**
 - **Heat**
 - **Pain**
 - **Instability**
 - Lymph nodes
 - **Size**
 - **Heat**
 - **Pain**
 - Rectal palpation
 - **What can be palpated using a rectal exam?**
 - **What precautions should you *always* take while doing a rectal exam?**



Assess for Cranial Abdominal Pain

- **Withers pinch test**
 - What is an normal response?
 - What is an abnormal response?
- **Push on sternum with a pole or bar**
 - Requires two people
 - Results can be difficult to interpret
- **A compass can be used to determine if a magnet has been administered**



Urine dipstick

- **Urine dipstick contents**
 - Urine pH
 - Blood
 - White blood cells
 - Red blood cells
 - Ketone bodies
 - Protein
 - Glucose
- **Results must be utilized as a supplement to the physical examination**
 - Interpreted with other symptoms in mind



Body Temperature Evaluation

- **Hypothermia**
 - What are the causes of a low body temperature recording?
- **Hyperthermia**
 - What are the causes an elevated body temperature?



Evaluation of Excretions and Secretions

- **Ocular discharge**
 - Unilateral versus bilateral
 - Mucopurulent
- **Nasal discharge**
 - Mucopurulent
 - Serous
 - Bloody
- **Mammary gland**
 - Milk
 - California mastitis test
 - **Measures white blood cells**
- **Vaginal**
- **Urethral**



Response to Therapy

- Often the specific diagnosis is not determined
- Practitioners may provide therapy to address identified symptoms
- Often response to therapy enables the veterinary professional to arrive at a final diagnosis