

Gastrointestinal Examination

1. General inspection (end of bed)

Patient:

- Jaundice?
- General well being
- Attitude of patient
- Mental state - encephalopathy

Around the bed

- Specific diet e.g. diabetic, vomit bowl, dialysis filter

2. Hands

- Clubbing (GI lymphoma, liver cirrhosis, malabsorption – coeliacs, inflammatory bowel disease)
- Peripheral cyanosis
- Capillary refill time (<3-4s)
- Leuconychia (hypoalbuminaemia)
- Koilonychia (Fe deficiency)
- Beaus lines
- Palmar erythema (cirrhosis, pregnancy, thyrotoxicosis, rheumatoid arthritis)
- Dupuytren's contracture
- Palmar crease pigmentation (Addison's)

- ASTERIXIS (hepatic, renal, respiratory failure; salicylate overdose)

3. Radial pulse

- Rate – tachycardia with GI blood loss
- Low volume with hypovolaemia

4. Blood Pressure

5. Arms

- Spider naevi
- Bruising
- Wasting
- Scratch marks

6. Face and eyes

- Conjunctival pallor – anaemia
- Scleral jaundice
- Kaiser Fleischer rings – Wilson's
- Xanthelasma – Primary biliary cirrhosis
- Parotid enlargement - ? alcohol

7. Mouth

- Lips
 - Angular stomatitis/cheilosis
 - Leucoplakia
 - Localised pigmentation (Peutz Jeghers syndrome)

- Gums
 - Gingivitis, bleeding
 - Hypertrophy
 - Pigmentation

- Tongue
 - Atrophic glossitis – B12 or Fe deficiency
 - Furring
 - leucoplakia

8. Neck

- Cervical lymphadenopathy
- Left supraclavicular fossa – Virchovs node

9. Chest Inspection

- Spider naevi – liver failure, high oestrogen states
- Gynaecomastia
- Loss of hair

10. Abdomen inspection

- Shape and movements with respiration.

- Ask patient to suck in and blow out tummy to assess for peritonism

- Distension (umbilical eversion)
 - Localised – mass, dilated bowel loop, organomegaly
 - Generalised – fluid, fat, fetus, flatus, faeces

- Scars

- Striae – rapid weight gain, post partum, Cushings (red-purple)

- Visible peristalsis – bowel obstruction

- Distended veins – portal hypertension – caput medusae

- Divarication of the rectus or other hernias (lift legs off bed or cough)

11. Abdominal palpation – kneel to level of abdomen

- Superficial palpation – assess tenderness and guarding

- Deep palpation – abnormal masses – size, consistency, shape, mobility
- Palpation for abdominal aortic aneurysm – Pulsatile and expansile

12. Liver

- Palpation
 - measure enlargement below costal margin in the mid-clavicular line
 - Enlargement
 - Soft and tender – hepatitis or heart failure
 - Firm and nodular – early cirrhosis, metastasis or hepatocellular carcinoma
- Percussion
 - Percuss from resonance to dull
 - Potential displacement due to emphysematous lungs
- Auscultation
 - Friction rub
 - Scratch test

13. Gall bladder

- If palpable in presence of jaundice, not stones = Courvoisier
- Inspiratory catch – cholecystitis = Murphys sign

14. Spleen

- Palpation
 - Start in right iliac fossa
 - May need to turn patient to their right
- Percussion
 - Dull to percussion
- Auscultation
 - Friction rub over infarct
- Splenomegaly
 - Huge – chronic myeloid leukaemia, myelofibrosis, kala-azar, lymphoma
 - Moderate – haemolytic anaemia, portal hypertension, storage disease e.g. Gauchers
 - Small – infective endocarditis, infectious mononucleosis, typhoid
- Hepatosplenomegaly
 - Chronic leukaemia
 - Myelofibrosis

- Cirrhosis with portal hypertension

15. Kidneys

- Palpation
 - Ballotment observing fullness in the flanks
- Percussion
 - Normally resonant due to bowel overlying the retroperitoneal organs
- Palpable kidneys
 - Unilateral: carcinoma, hydronephrosis, cyst, hypertrophy
 - Bilateral: PCKD, bilateral hydronephrosis, amyloidosis
- Kidney vs Spleen
 - Bimanual ballotment of kidney
 - Notch of spleen
 - Kidney resonant, spleen dull to percussion
 - Kidney enlarges downwards, spleen towards right iliac fossa
 - Palpate above kidney

16. Ascites

- Percussion
 - Elicit horseshoe pattern of dullness
 - Elicit shifting dullness (roll patient towards you)
- Fluid thrill

17. Auscultation of abdomen

- Bowel sounds
 - Obstruction – frequent, loud, high pitched, tinkling sounds
 - Paralytic ileus – absent sounds
- Bruit
 - Aortic (above umbilicus)
 - Renal
 - Iliac

18. Groin

- Examine external genitalia
- Examine for lymphadenopathy
- Examine hernial orifices (+/- standing)

19. Digital rectal examination

20. Legs

- Inspection
 - Swelling
 - Purpura, bruising
 - Cyanosis
 - Toe clubbing
- Palpation
 - ? pitting ankle oedema
 - Peripheral neuropathy (alcohol)

21. Additional tests

- Basic observations: Blood pressure, temperature, respiratory rate, oxygen saturation
- Urinalysis – bilirubin
- Faeces examination e.g. FOB, microscopy, culture