

## Skull, Scalp and Hair Assessment

To assess the hair, use techniques of inspection and palpation. Start with the skull, inspecting the size, shape and contour. Inspect and palpate the skull for areas for tenderness or lesions. Next, move on to the scalp, examining for tenderness, lesions or rashes. Inspect for dandruff, lice or nits. Then move on to the hair assessment. Inspect the quality and general appearance of hair, as well as hair distribution.



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### Skull

#### Inspect Size, Shape and Contour

##### [Size, Shape and Contour of Skull](#)

The skull should be generally round, with prominences in the frontal and occipital area.

#### Inspect and Palpate Areas for Tenderness or Lesions

##### [Paw Skull for Tenderizer and Leeches](#)

There should be no tenderness upon palpation. If there is, ask the patient about the history of trauma or falls.

### Scalp

#### Inspect for Tenderness, Lesions or Rashes

##### [Scalp with Tenderizer, Leeches and Rash](#)

Examine the scalp for scaling, redness, open areas, crusting, and tenderness.

#### Inspect for Dandruff

##### [Dandruff](#)

Dandruff is a collection of flaky or patchy white/gray scales on the surface of the scalp. This may mistakenly be thought to come from the scalp being too dry; but, it's actually a problem of excessive oil production. An extremely oily scalp can induce inflammatory changes with redness and itching. If severe dandruff is not treated, alopecia (hair loss) can occur.

#### Inspect for Lice or Nits

##### [Lice and Nits](#)

Examine the scalp and pubis for lice and nits (lice eggs).

### Hair

#### Inspect Quality and General Appearance of Hair

##### [Quality and General with Hair](#)

How well the hair is groomed and cleaned can give information about a patient's health care needs. Question the patient about itching and examine the scalp and pubis for lice and nits (lice eggs), scaling, redness, open areas, crusting, and tenderness.

#### Observe Hair Distribution

##### [Hair Distribution](#)

Observe the scalp for hair distribution and thickness, and note variations. Gradual hair loss occurs with aging, but sudden asymmetric or patchy hair loss, called alopecia, is concerning. Body hair loss, especially on the feet/lower legs, can occur with decreased blood flow to the area in addition to also being a part of aging. Excess hair growth over the face and chest in women is a sign of hirsutism. It can occur on the face of a woman either as part of aging, as a sign of hormonal imbalance, or as a side effect of drug intervention. If hirsutism is present, observe for variation in fat distribution and capillary fragility, which can show up in Cushing disease, and inquire about clitoral enlargement and voice deepening, which may be reflective of ovarian dysfunction.