Nose Assessment

A nose assessment consists of examining the external structures of the nose and the internal nasal cavity. The external structure of the nose should be symmetrical and proportionate to the rest of the person's face. Look for signs of inflammation, deformities or lesions on the nose. If an injury to the nose is suspected, gently palpate the area and assess for pain and color change. To assess a nasal obstruction, occlude one nostril at a time and ask the person to breathe in through their nose. Airflow should be even on both sides. Next, check the internal structures of the nose by asking the person to lift their head back and examining inside the nostrils. Examine the nasal cavity with either a short, wide-tipped speculum, or by gazing inside with a light. The nasal mucosa should be smooth, pink and not inflamed.. There should not be any discharge, bleeding or foreign bodies. Nasal septum deviation is common, and is not a concern unless it causes airflow obstruction. Lastly, palpate the sinuses by firmly pressing up and under the eyebrows, and then below the cheekbones bilaterally. The person should not feel any pain.

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External Nose

Inspect for Deformity or Asymmetry
Deformity and Asymmetry
The first step of the nose assessment is to examine the external structure of the nose. The nose should be symmetrical, in the middle of the face, and be proportionate to the rest of the person's face.

Inspect for Inflammation and Skin Lesions
Nose In-flames and Leeches
Look for any signs of inflammation, deformities or lesions on the nose. If an injury to the nose is suspected, gently palpate the area and assess for pain and color change.

Nasal Cavity

Check for Nasal Obstruction
Nasal-cave Obstruction
To assess for a nasal obstruction, occlude one nostril at a time and ask the person to breathe through the unoccluded nare.. An obstruction may hinder the patient's ability to breathe.

Inspect Nasal Mucosa
Nasal Mucosa
Look for any signs of inflammation, deformities or lesions on the nose. If an injury to the nose is suspected, gently palpate the area and assess for pain and color change.

Note Discharge, Bleeding or Foreign Body
Discharge, Blood and Foreign Body Attached
When inspecting the nasal cavity, note any discharge, bleeding or foreign body. Also observe the nasal septum for deviation, which looks like one nare opening larger than the other. Deviated septums are common and not concerning unless they cause airflow obstruction.

Sinus Area

Palpate the Sinus Areas
Paw Sinner
To palpate the sinuses, firmly press up and under the eyebrows (frontal sinuses), and then over the below the cheekbones (maxillary sinuses) bilaterally. The person should feel pressure without discomfort.

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