

## **Tricky Topics in Nursing**

### *Chest Auscultation*

#### **Narrator:**

Hello and welcome. In this short video, we'll be taking a closer look at the chest auscultation procedure. It is a common procedure used to listen to the sounds made by the heart, lungs, and other internal organs.

Chest auscultation is an important tool for diagnosing and monitoring various conditions. As a healthcare student, it is useful for you to have a thorough understanding of the steps involved in the procedure.

Introduce yourself and check you have the correct patient. Explain the procedure to the patient and check they have understood. Ask for the patient's consent prior to proceeding.

Remember to maintain dignity and ensure privacy throughout.

Gather Personal Protective Equipment, following local policies as appropriate. A stethoscope will be required and hospital disinfectant or isopropyl alcohol wipes.

It is important to ensure your stethoscope has been cleaned and allowed to dry. Always follow local infection prevention and control guidance.

Decontaminate your hands and apply any Personal Protective Equipment that is required.

Check that the stethoscope is in good condition and that you know how to use it, referring to manufacturer guidelines as necessary.

Most stethoscope models have a diaphragm that detects high-pitched sounds and a bell that detects low-pitched sounds.

If the patient is able, they should sit in an upright position, as this will promote optimal lung expansion.

You may need to ask the patient to remove or loosen any clothing that covers the chest area. Provide a gown or draping if necessary to maintain their privacy during the examination. It is important to keep the patient warm and the area free from drafts for their comfort.

Inform the patient that you are commencing the procedure before placing it on the patient's skin. If necessary, warm the stethoscope between your hands before starting.

Position the earpieces comfortably in your ears and hold the chest-piece between the index finger and middle finger of your dominant hand.

Start at the front of the chest. Place the diaphragm of the stethoscope on the righthand side of the patient's chest at the first intercostal space. Now use the step ladder approach to move your way down to the bottom of the chest.

While in each position in the stepladder pause for inspiration and expiration, listening for normal breath sounds. Take note of any abnormal sounds, common examples include crackles, wheezing and stridor.

Seek to identify any differences in breath sounds between each side of the chest.

If you detect an abnormal sound with the diaphragm, you may choose to use the bell to confirm or further assess the sound. Switching between the diaphragm and bell can help differentiate between high and low-frequency sounds.

Now repeat the process at the rear of the patient's chest. Place the diaphragm of the stethoscope on the lefthand side of the chest at the first intercostal space. Now use the step ladder approach to move your way down to the bottom of the chest.

Once this has been completed, you can then listen to each side of the chest, asking the patient to move their arm so you access the lateral area. Move from the top to the middle and lower lobe areas.

You can now inform the patient that the assessment has finished. If necessary, assist them in replacing their clothing and into a comfortable position.

Remember to explain your findings to the patient, asking if they have any questions.

Now clean the stethoscope. Support the patient into a comfortable position and provide information about having the catheter in place, answering any questions they may have.

Decontaminate your hands.

Document what you have carried out and plan any further care that may be required.

Remember to always work within your expected performance level and under the supervision of a registered professional.

Thank you for watching this video on chest auscultation We hope you found it useful.