7.1: Head and Neck Assessment Introduction

Learning Objectives

- Perform a head and neck assessment, including the skull, face, nose, oral cavity, and neck
- Modify assessment techniques to reflect variations across the life span
- Recognize and report significant deviations from norms
- Document actions and observations

Inspection of a patient’s head, neck, and oral cavity is part of the routine daily assessment performed by a registered nurse (RN) during inpatient care. There are also several head and neck conditions that the RN may be the first to notice after a patient is admitted that require notification of the health care provider. Let’s get started by reviewing the basic anatomy and physiology of the head and neck and common medical conditions.