12.1: Abdominal Assessment Introduction

Learning Objectives

- Perform an abdominal assessment
- Differentiate normal and abnormal bowel sounds
- Modify assessment techniques to reflect variations across the life span
- Document actions and observations
- Recognize and report significant deviations from norms

A thorough assessment of the abdomen provides valuable information regarding the function of a patient’s gastrointestinal (GI) and genitourinary (GU) systems. Understanding how to properly assess the abdomen and recognizing both normal and abnormal assessment findings will allow the nurse to provide high-quality care to the patient.