14.1: Integumentary Assessment Introduction

Learning Objectives

- Perform an integumentary assessment including the skin, hair, and nails
- Modify assessment techniques to reflect variations across the life span and ethnic and cultural variations
- Document actions and observations
- Recognize and report significant deviations from norms

Assessing the skin, hair, and nails is part of a routine head-to-toe assessment completed by registered nurses. During inpatient care, a comprehensive skin assessment on admission establishes a baseline for the condition of a patient’s skin and is essential for developing a care plan for the prevention and treatment of skin injuries. Before discussing the components of a routine skin assessment, let’s review the anatomy of the skin and some common skin and hair conditions.