

CHECKLIST FOR DIGITAL RECTAL EXAMINATION – UNDERGRADUATE GUIDE

Ones in BLACK must do or comment on, Ones in BLUE must comment on only if present or applicable to patient. Content in blue should be in back of your mind so say when you are practicing but not during exam unless seen on the patient in the exam. **FOLLOW THIS CHECKLIST IN PUBLISHED ORDER**

Stage 1 – Pre Exam Checklist	
1. Alcohol Gel / Bare Below Elbows	
2. Introduction – “Shake hands/ hello my name is.....”	
3. Consent – “Will it be okay if I examine your back passage? You will feel slight discomfort but it should not be painful.”	
4. Chaperone – “I will have the nurse present to assist/chaperone”	
5. Expose - “You will need to remove your lower garments”	
6. Positioning – Lie in Sim’s position / lateral decubitus position or say “lie on your side and bring your knees up as high as you can”	
Stage 2 – General inspection	
1. Take a step back to end of the bed	
2. Comment on patient (obvious only) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfortable at rest or not • Obvious signs of distress (e.g. hyperventilation, clammy, pale) 	
Stage 3: Prepare equipment	
1. Lubricant	
2. Gloves and apron	
Stage 4: DRE	
1. Closer inspection – Lift gluteal fold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scars • Lumps: Haemorrhoids, abscesses, warts, tumours, polyp • Fissures • Fistulae • Pus/discharge • Discolouration <p>Remember to localise and document findings as per “anal clock”, 12 o-clock is always the genital end.</p>	
2. Palpate – Warn patient, remind patient to breathe normally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posterior wall • Lateral walls • Anterior wall – palpate prostate in males. Comment on size, symmetry of lobes, median sulcus, consistency, abnormal masses and tenderness. 	
3. Anal sphincteric tone - Now while pressing on posterior aspect of external anal sphincter, ask patient to squeeze against your	

finger.	
4. Warn patient when removing finger	
5. Inspect examining finger for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faeces –colour • Blood • Pus • Mucous 	
STAGE 5: TO FINISH OFF	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faecal occult blood test (FOBT) • Endoscopy • Banding • Document findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. Normal external appearance, empty rectum, no blood, no masses, normal tone 	
STAGE 6: COMPLETION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove gloves and dispose of in a clinical waste bin • Thank the patient • Offer to help get dressed and cover up • WASH HANDS WITH SOAP AT THE END • REMEMBER to explain findings to the patient 	
STAGE 7: PRESENT FINDINGS	
END OF EXAMINATION	