Chapter 13
Detailed Physical Examination

Overview
- Patients Needing a Detailed Examination
- Examination Procedure
- Assessing Vital Signs

Detailed Physical Examination
- Patients needing a detailed examination
  - Patient- and injury-specific (e.g., cut finger would not require a detailed physical exam)
  - Patients with significant injuries, significant mechanisms of injury, and unresponsive patients require a detailed physical exam
Ideally, the detailed examination should be performed en route to the appropriate facility. This assessment should be performed on unresponsive patients (trauma and medical), provided that life threats are managed.

Examination Procedure

- Perform a detailed physical examination on the patient to gather additional information
- As you inspect and palpate, look and/or feel for the following examples of injuries or signs of injury
  - Deformities
  - Contusions
  - Abrasions
  - Punctures/penetrations
  - Burns
  - Tenderness
  - Lacerations
  - Swelling

This assessment is similar to the rapid trauma assessment. The detailed physical examination should be tailored to fit the needs of each individual patient.
Detailed Physical Examination Procedure

- Assess the head; inspect and palpate for injuries or signs of injury
  - DCAP-BTLS

Detailed Physical Examination Procedure

- Assess the face; inspect and palpate for injuries or signs of injury
  - DCAP-BTLS

Detailed Physical Examination Procedure

- Assess the ears; inspect and palpate for injuries or signs of injury
  - DCAP-BTLS
  - Drainage
Detailed Physical Examination Procedure

- Assess the eyes; inspect for injuries or signs of injury
  - DCAP-BTLS
    - Discoloration
    - Unequal pupils
    - Foreign bodies
    - Blood in anterior chamber

Detailed Physical Examination Procedure

- Assess the nose; inspect and palpate for injuries or signs of injury
  - DCAP-BTLS
    - Drainage
    - Bleeding

Detailed Physical Examination Procedure

- Assess the mouth; inspect for injuries or signs of injury
  - DCAP-BTLS
    - Teeth
    - Obstructions
    - Swollen or lacerated tongue
    - Odors
    - Discoloration
Detailed Physical Examination Procedure

- Assess the neck; inspect and palpate for injuries or signs of injury
  - DCAP-BTLS
  - Jugular vein distention
  - Crepitation

Detailed Physical Examination Procedure

- Many cervical collars have openings large enough to allow the EMT to assess the neck without removing the collar.
- If the collar obstructs the view, manually stabilize the head and open the collar.

Detailed Physical Examination Procedure

- Assess the chest; inspect and palpate for injuries or signs of injury
  - DCAP-BTLS
  - Crepitation
  - Paradoxical motion
  - Breath sounds in the apices, midclavicular line, bilaterally and at the bases, midaxillary line, bilaterally
Detailed Physical Examination Procedure

- Assess the abdomen, inspect and palpate for injuries or signs of injury
  - DCAP-BTLS
  - Firm
  - Soft
  - Distended

If the patient does not complain of pain or is unresponsive, gently flex and compress the pelvis to determine stability.

Detailed Physical Examination Procedure

- Assess the pelvis; inspect and palpate for injuries or signs of injury
  - DCAP-BTLS

Detailed Physical Examination Procedure

- Assess the legs; inspect and palpate for injuries or signs of injury
  - DCAP-BTLS
  - Distal pulses
  - Sensation
  - Motor function
Detailed Physical Examination

- Assess the arms in the same manner as the legs

Detailed Physical Examination

- Roll with spinal precautions and assess posterior aspect of body; inspect and palpate for injuries or signs of injury
  - DCAP-BTLS

Vital Signs
Vital Signs

- Assess baseline vital signs
  - Breathing
  - Skin
  - Pupils
  - Blood pressure

Summary

- Patients Needing a Detailed Examination
- Examination Procedure
- Assessing Vital Signs