

EVALUATING JOINT SOUNDS

PATIENTS MAY REPORT AUDIBLE CLICKING DURING AN EXAM.

Less audible sounds from the temporomandibular joints may be detected by using a stethoscope, electronic stethoscope, or Doppler ultra sound instrument. Patients will often make you aware of audible clicking or popping sounds and you may notice it during a routine exam.

During the evaluation, you will be listening for crepitus during slight opening and at full opening and clicking during slight opening and at full opening. Crepitus sounds like scratching or grating and will occur only during jaw movements. A normal joint is quiet.

With the stethoscope or Doppler device over one of the TM joints (front and center of ear), ask the patient to open and close slowly for a total duration of approximately 1 second, and...

- Listen for crepitus when the patient is opening slightly (on rotation), and
- Listen for crepitus when the patient is opening wide (translation). Record your findings on the exam worksheet.

Again, with the stethoscope or Doppler device over the same joint (front and center of ear), ask the patient to open slowly (for a total duration of approximately 1 second), and while the patient is opening...

- Listen for clicking, note if the click occurs only when the patient is opening slightly (on rotation), or
- Listen for clicking that occurs only when the patient opens wide (translation). Record your findings on the exam worksheet.

Repeat procedure for the other joint and record your findings on the exam worksheet.

Audible clicking is sound that can be heard without the use of an instrument.



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