

Practical F

Assessing facial nerve function

Introduction

Facial nerve can be affected in diseases of the ear.

Equipment

None

PROCEDURE

1. Look at the face of the patient and look for any asymmetry between the two sides.
2. Ask the person to close her eyes tightly. Observe and see if there is any asymmetry between the two sides. Is one eye not so tightly closed?
3. Ask the person to smile broadly. Observe for any asymmetry. Is the smile one-sided?
4. Ask the person to blow cheeks with lips closed, as though blowing a balloon. Observe for asymmetry. Is one side less full than the other?
5. Injury to facial nerve or Bell's palsy can lead to weakness and asymmetry.