Summary of Skills – Abdominal Exam

☐ 1. Wash hands
☐ 2. Gown and drape appropriately – allowing full exposure
☐ 3. Exam done from right-hand side of the patient's body

Observe & inspect abdomen
☐ 4. Shape, scars, color, symmetry, unusual protrusions

Auscultation
☐ 5. Listen w/diaphragm to 4 quadrants – 15 seconds each area
☐ 6. Note quantify and quality of bowel sounds
☐ 7. Listen for bruits centrally & over renal arteries (*special test – relevant if unexplained hypertension, kidney disease, ischemic symptoms and appropriate risk factors)

Percussion
☐ 8. Percuss all quadrants
☐ 9. Percuss liver span
☐ 10. Percuss area of spleen, stomach

Palpation
☐ 11. Palpate all quadrants superficially
☐ 12. Palpate all quadrants deeply – think about what “lives” in each area
☐ 13. Try to identify liver edge (w/inspiration)
☐ 14. Palpate region of spleen
☐ 15. Palpate area of aorta (*special test: if risk factors for AAA)
☐ 16. Assess costo-vertebral angle for tenderness (*special test: if concern for pyelonephritis)
☐ 17. Wash hands

*Special Test: Not done on routine exam – Reserved for specific clinical situations