

**Michigan State University
College of Human Medicine**

Clinical Skills Equipment List

Incoming students are often interested in what medical instruments and clinical equipment they need to purchase. The following list includes the main items you will need, initially for use in HM 532, the Clinical Skills course where you will start learning the basics of physical exam in the spring of Block I. You will continue to use these instruments throughout your training, and likely use many of them throughout your career.

Stethoscope

- Should have a dual lumen
- Must have both "bell" and "diaphragm" capabilities (If you buy a stethoscope with a "tunable diaphragm" such as the Littman Cardiology III, we suggest you convert the pediatric diaphragm into a bell)
- Avoid stethoscopes designed only for taking BPs, often labeled for nurse use. These will not be adequate for your needs
- You may want to get an inexpensive nametag for yours to help you to label and identify it

Blood pressure cuff (Sphygmomanometer)

- An average adult size cuff is sufficient
- You may wish to consider getting child and larger adult cuffs for future use

Otoscope/Ophthalmoscope

- Must be a traditional ophthalmoscope, not "panoptic" (Panoptics give a wider view; however, they are more expensive and are often not available in clinics and emergency departments, so you will still need to learn how to use a standard ophthalmoscope)
- Avoid "pocket" or "mini" otoscopes or ophthalmoscopes. These will not be adequate for your needs.
- Otoscope should come with some ear speculums.

Penlight

Reflex hammer

- Any type is fine

Tape measure with centimeter markings

Small plastic ruler with centimeter markings

Wristwatch

- Analog watch with a "second" hand or digital watch that shows seconds, to allow you to count respirations and heart rate

Tuning fork (256Hz or 128Hz)

- Will not be used until Block II, so you may wait to purchase if you wish

Eye Examination Card (also not used until Block II)

Bag to carry medical instruments

- Any bag is fine as long as it is clean and neat in appearance. It does not need to be intended for medical use.

A few general comments:

- Your most expensive purchases are likely to be your otoscope/ophthalmoscope and your stethoscope.
- The penlight, reflex hammer, ruler, tape measure, and tuning fork should be inexpensive.
- It is NOT necessary to buy the fanciest, newest, top-of-the line equipment. However, be sure to buy high quality instruments. You often do get what you pay for. The advantage of buying new is that you may get warranties and service, and it may well last you for most of your career, if handled carefully. Disadvantage is, of course, price.
- Shop around. Be careful about internet purchases; some vendors sell inferior equipment.
- There is an equipment sale sponsored by a student organization in the fall.
- Label everything with your name as soon as you get it. Equipment often looks the same and you want to be able to identify yours.

Generalizations of cost:

Below is a general idea of the cost for new equipment, but prices may vary.

- Stethoscope \$80-150
- BP cuff \$15-30
- Otoscope/Ophthalmoscope \$450 for standard
- Penlight \$3-5
- Reflex hammer \$5-9
- Tuning fork \$11-15