

Lack's Tongue Depressor



This is a very commonly used OPD instrument.

It has two blades at right angles to each other. One of them is slightly wider than the other and is completely flat. This is the part of the tongue depressor that is inserted into the oral cavity. The other blade is narrower and has a slight curve at its free end, like a handle. This is the part of the instrument that is held in your hand.

Uses of the tongue depressor:

- Examination of the oral cavity – vestibule, buccal mucosa, gums, floor of the mouth
- Examination of the oropharynx and posterior pharyngeal wall
- Used in posterior rhinoscopy, along with the postnasal mirror
- For the 'cold spatula test' – to assess (approximately) the nasal airway/ patency in the OPD
- To perform minor procedures in the oral cavity
- To take a throat swab or a swab from the tonsil

How to use the tongue depressor:

- ✓ Hold the instrument by the narrower blade that acts as a handle.
- ✓ Insert the other blade into the oral cavity.
- ✓ First retract the cheek so you can examine the vestibule, buccal mucosa and gums and repeat the same on the other side.
- ✓ Then place the blade flatly on the dorsum of the tongue and press it down – this will allow you to examine the palate, tonsillar pillars, the tonsils and the posterior pharyngeal wall.
- ✓ Take care to depress only the anterior two-thirds of the tongue with this instrument. Touching the posterior third of the tongue will elicit the gag reflex.