

Localization of the jugular vein in small ruminants and camelids
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Localization of the jugular vein in heavily-wooled sheep and South American Camelids (SACs) can be challenging, particularly in males with heavily-muscled necks. The following set of landmarks has been used by the author for instruction of veterinarians and veterinary students. The middle- to upper one-third of the right side of the neck is visualized. The trachea is first located with the left hand, and the left index finger is placed on the ventral midline of the neck, directly over the midline of the trachea. With the right hand, and at the same level of the neck, the lateral aspect of the neck is palpated until the bony protruberance that marks a transverse process of the cervical vertebra is felt – in the upper neck, this is usually C3. The right index finger is placed on the palpable bone. An imaginary line is then drawn between the two fingers. At the halfway point along this line, the jugular furrow is found.

To put this in fewer words, the jugular furrow lies at the halfway point between the palpable bones of the side of the upper third of the neck (the transverse processes of the cervical vertebrae) and the midline, designated by the trachea.

A stethoscope or a 30-40 cm length of rubber tubing (such as a cut inner tube from a bike tire) can be placed around the animal's neck at the thoracic inlet and tightened; this helps to distend the jugular veins.

Sheep venipuncture: Use of inner tube to distend jugular veins

The carotid arteries are deep enough in the neck that the danger of occlusion of blood flow in these vessels is virtually nil.



Stethoscope tourniquet



