



CommunityENT

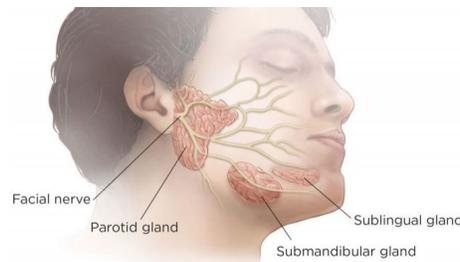
EAR • NOSE • THROAT • ALLERGY

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Submandibular Gland Excision

What is the submandibular gland?

The submandibular gland is a salivary gland about the size of a plum that lies right below your lower jaw. Saliva drains through a tube from the gland to the inside of your mouth. If this drain gets clogged with stones or chronically infected, sometimes the submandibular gland is surgically removed.



What happens during surgery?

The submandibular gland is removed under general anesthesia. The surgeon will make a cut about 2-3 inch long in the upper part of the neck just below the jaw. If you have salivary stones, sometimes the surgeon makes an incision inside the mouth to remove the stone. Once the gland is removed, the incision is closed with sutures. These sutures need to be removed 7-10 days after surgery. Occasionally a small drain is placed in the wound to collect any blood, the drain is usually removed within 24 hours of surgery. This procedure takes 1-1.5 hours and usually a patient goes home a few hours after surgery

What are the possible complications?

Bleeding and Infection are possible with any surgery

Sometimes saliva can leak out of a wound, this is called a salivary fistula. Typically with time, this resolves. Dry mouth can happen, however you have several salivary glands and usually most people do not notice any decrease in saliva.

Nerve damage is the most important complication. There are 3 nerves that lie close to the submandibular gland. If one of these nerves is damaged, it can cause temporary or permanent deficits.

If a branch of the facial nerve called the marginal mandibular nerve is damaged, you can have weakness of the lower lip, that could cause a crooked smile. The lingual nerve if damaged can cause tongue numbness, the sensation is similar to dental numbing. The hypoglossal nerve if damaged, causes difficulty with tongue motion.

What can I expect after surgery?

Most patients can go home after surgery with pain medicine. The incision is typically swollen and tender. Usually the scar heals well and is barely visible over time

What to do at home

Keep the wound dry the first week after surgery. Depending on your occupation, you may need a few days off work. No strenuous activity for the first 2 weeks. If your surgery required a cut in the mouth, a soft diet is advisable.

When do you follow-up?

Follow-up is typically 7-10 days after surgery

When should I call my doctor?

If you have rapid swelling or increase in redness around the incision. If you have persistent bleeding or mucus draining from the incision. If you have increased pain or tenderness in your upper/lower jaw

If you have any side effects to medications: rash, nausea, vomiting, constipation or headache or a temperature over 100.5

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Source: Cancer Care. Memorial Sloan Kettering. Accessed 7/7/2020

<https://www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/types/salivary-gland/salivary-glands-anatomy>