

PAROTID & SUBMANDIBULAR GLANDS



WHAT ARE PAROTID & SUBMANDIBULAR GLANDS?

The **parotid & submandibular glands** make up two of the three major salivary glands in the body that secrete saliva near the upper teeth and under the tongue, and help aid in digestion, oral lubrication and hygiene, and protection against tooth decay. These glands are susceptible to benign or malignant tumors that appear as a lump in front of or below the ear. Parotid & submandibular gland tumors can spread from other areas of the body to enter the gland through the lymphatic system, and may include lymphomas, melanoma or squamous cell carcinoma, among others.

DIAGNOSIS

- ▶ **Physical Exam:**
 - ▶ The physician will examine the jaw, neck, and throat for lumps or swelling.
- ▶ **Biopsy:**
 - ▶ A biopsy is required to diagnose the airway and sample the tissue.
- ▶ **Imaging Tests:**
 - ▶ MRI
 - ▶ CT scan
 - ▶ Ultrasound

SYMPTOMS

- ▶ Lump or swelling on or near the jaw, neck, or mouth
- ▶ Numbness in the face
- ▶ Muscle weakness on one side of the face
- ▶ Pain in the area of the gland
- ▶ Difficulty swallowing

SURGERY

- ▶ **Parotidectomy:**
 - ▶ Treatment of parotid gland tumors may require surgical removal of the gland. This procedure, known as parotidectomy, is performed under general anesthesia and may require a short hospital stay as well. Depending on the size of the tumor, a partial or total parotidectomy may be performed. During a parotidectomy, an incision is made in front of the ear, similar to the incision used during a facelift. The tumor and a small margin of surrounding tissue are removed through the incision. After the parotidectomy procedure, a drainage tube will be placed at the incision site to collect blood, serum and saliva, which can usually be removed after one day.
- ▶ **Submandibular Gland Excision:**
 - ▶ Surgical removal of the submandibular gland may be necessary to provide relief from tumors or chronic infection. Submandibular gland excision is performed under general anesthesia, and patients usually return home the same day. During the excision procedure, an incision is made in the neck, right under the jawbone. The entire gland is then removed from the surrounding muscles, vessels and nerves. After the submandibular gland excision procedure, a drainage tube may be placed at the site of the incision, which can then be removed the next day.
- ▶ **Facial Nerve Treatment:**
 - ▶ During a parotidectomy, it is important to identify the facial nerve and carefully work around it in order to reduce the risk of damage, which can result in facial paralysis or other serious complications. Facial nerve monitoring confirms the position of the nerve throughout surgery and verifies its integrity at the completion of the procedure. This provides peace of mind to both patient and surgeon, ensuring that the procedure goes smoothly and reducing the chance of post-operative complications.