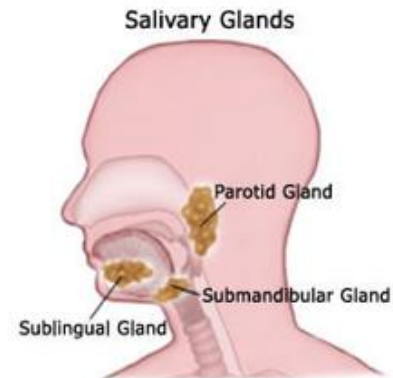


Information on Parotidectomy

The Parotid Gland: The parotid gland is a gland that produces saliva. You have two glands, one on each side of your face. The gland rests on the muscles of chewing in front of the ear canal. The gland may extend below the earlobe. The gland may need to be removed for several reasons.

1. The parotid gland may develop tumors, the majority of which are benign.
2. The parotid gland may become repetitively blocked with stones and subsequently infected. Most of these stones cannot be seen on X-ray films.
3. Six to ten lymph nodes reside in or adjacent to the parotid gland. These lymph nodes drain the skin of the cheek, temple, and ear. Some skin cancers in these areas may spread to the lymph nodes in the parotid gland.



The Facial Nerve: The facial nerve starts in the brain, exits the skull just under the ear canal and splits into 5 thin branches, which run through the parotid gland. This nerve controls the muscles of facial expression: forehead wrinkling, eyebrow raising, eyelid squinting and blinking, lip puckering, and smiling.

Parotidectomy: Removal of some or all of the parotid gland is termed a parotidectomy. The incision starts in front of the ear canal, runs down under the earlobe, and curves slightly forward in the upper neck. Much of the procedure involves separating the parotid tissue from the fine branches of the facial nerve. After the gland is removed, the incision is closed. A small drain is often placed at the bottom of the incision to remove fluid that commonly forms after surgery.

Questions: Ask your surgeon if you have other questions or concerns.