



PAROTIDECTOMY

BACKGROUND

The parotid gland is a large salivary gland in front of the ear. It makes saliva, which is then excreted into the mouth to help keep our mouth moist and digest food. Sometimes the duct that connects the mouth to the parotid gland becomes blocked, which can be quite painful. Over time, a small tumor or growth can develop in the salivary gland that needs to be removed. Most of these growths are non-cancerous, but still need to be removed. The nerve that allows us to move our face travels right through the parotid gland, and needs to be protected if possible during parotid gland surgery.

PAROTID SURGERY

The parotid gland needs to be removed if a tumor or growth develops there, or if the gland repeatedly becomes infected and inflamed. Usually parotid surgery is performed at the hospital and usually requires an overnight stay. Many times a drain is placed to prevent fluid or saliva collection at the surgical site. This is typically removed several days following surgery, and many patients are able to go home without the drain.

The main risks of parotid gland surgery are:

- Fluid collection around the surgical site.
- Damage to the facial nerve (rare).
- Facial sweating as a prelude to eating.
- Numbness around the ear and cheek.

What to expect after surgery:

- Pain: pain following surgery is usually well controlled with Tylenol® or narcotic pain medications
- Fatigue: following surgery, you may be tired for about a week
- Drain: You may go home with a drain to help prevent fluid collection. Make sure to follow care instructions and measurement of output.
- Numbness: You can expect to have numbness over your cheek and ear following surgery. Some of this will resolve, but some will likely be permanent.

Instructions following surgery:

- Do not soak or swim for at least two weeks following surgery.
- Gently clean the incision starting 3 days after surgery with mild soap and water, and blot dry with a clean towel.
- Activity: you should not engage in any strenuous activity for two weeks following surgery (running, biking, heavy lifting, etc.). You should get up and walk and move around. Staying immobile increases your risk for a blood clot.
- Do not use aspirin, Motrin®, Advil®, Aleve®, or any other NSAID product for pain, as this may increase your risk of bleeding.