



The Parotid Gland and Parotidectomy

The parotid gland is the largest of the salivary glands, located on the sides of the face, primarily lying in front of and beneath the ear. Its primary function is the secretion of saliva to facilitate chewing and digestion.

Parotidectomy is the surgical removal of the parotid gland, typically performed to remove tumors (benign or cancerous) or treat chronic infections. The procedure varies in complexity depending on the size and location of the tumor/gland, and it requires careful dissection to preserve the facial nerve that traverses the gland. The procedure is done under general anesthesia and often takes 2-4 hours. Some patients stay overnight at the surgical facility, but many go home the same day. Typically, a drain tube is placed during the procedure and remains in place for several days before removal in the office.

Pre-Operative Instructions:

- **Fasting:**
 - Avoid eating or drinking after midnight the night before surgery.
- **Medications:**
 - You will likely need to stop taking blood thinners, weight loss medications and some diabetes medications. Consult with your doctor. See attached medication sheet for general recommendations.
 - Take all other prescribed medications with a small sip of water as instructed.
- **Health Status:**
 - Notify your doctor if you have any symptoms of cold, flu, or respiratory infection.
 - Inform your doctor of any allergies, especially to sedatives or anesthetics.
- **Day of Surgery:**
 - Arrive at the hospital or surgical center as instructed.
 - Wear comfortable clothing and remove jewelry and contact lens.
 - Arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home after the procedure, as you will not be able to drive yourself.

Post-Operative Instructions:

- **Medications:**
 - Resume your home medications after the procedure unless otherwise instructed.

Viewmont Surgery Center -- 50 13th Avenue NE Hickory, NC 28601 [\(828\) 624-1250](tel:8286241250)
www.viewmontsurgerycenter.com

Catawba Valley Medical Center -- 810 Fairgrove Church Rd, Hickory, NC [\(828\) 326-3000](tel:8283263000)
www.catawbavalleyhealth.org

Frye Regional Medical Center-- 420 N Center St, Hickory, NC 28601 [\(828\) 315-5000](tel:8283155000)
www.fryemedctr.com



- You may be prescribed antibiotics and pain medication after the procedure. Many patients only take acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Motrin) alternating doses every 3 hours. *Ex: Tylenol 500mg at 8am, Motrin 600mg at 11am, Tylenol 500mg at 2pm, Motrin 600mg at 5pm, etc...*
- **Activity:**
 - Rest for the first 24 hours after surgery.
 - Gradually resume normal activities as tolerated.
 - Avoid strenuous activities and heavy lifting for at least 1-2 weeks.
- **Diet:**
 - Resume a normal diet as soon as you feel able but start with soft foods to avoid discomfort while chewing.
- **Wound Care:**
 - Keep the surgical site clean and dry.
 - You may shower after 24-48 hours but avoid submerging the incision.
 - Report any signs of infection (redness, swelling, or discharge) to your doctor.
 - If you have a drain in place, measure and record the drain output volume every 8 hours.
- **Follow-Up:**
 - Follow up with your surgeon's office as scheduled for drain removal and wound check.
 - It is normal to experience some ear lobe swelling or ear numbness after the procedure.
 - Some patients may experience weakness of their face with an asymmetric smile or delayed blink. This may take weeks or months to recover.
- **Emergency Situations:**
 - If you experience severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing, uncontrolled pain, significant swelling or bleeding from the incision, or weakness of your face which doesn't allow you to close your eye (with an associated dryness or irritation of the eye itself), call our office or seek immediate medical attention.

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