



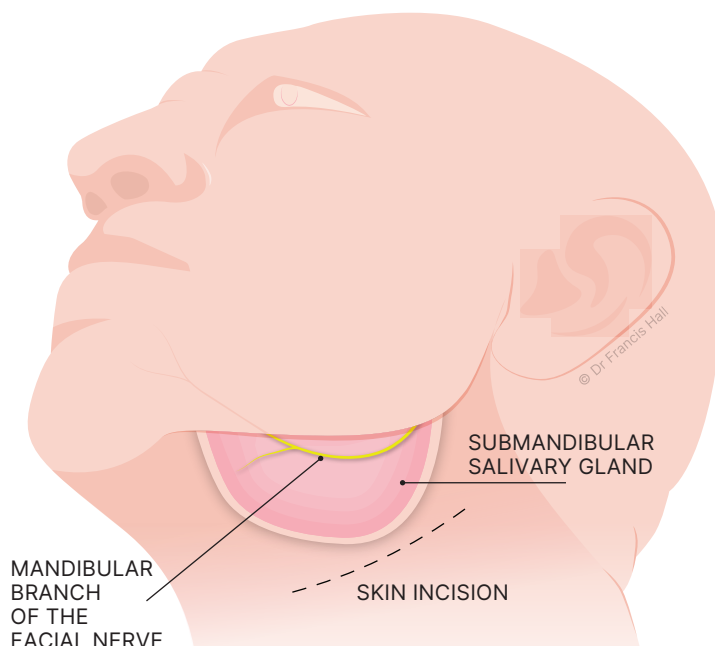
Dr. *Francis* T. Hall

EAR, NOSE, THROAT, HEAD & NECK

Submandibular gland excision care

The submandibular gland makes saliva and lies under the jaw. The submandibular gland is excised if there is a tumour in the gland or if there are recurrent infections and swelling of the gland.

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how long it will take for you to recover. But each person recovers at a different pace. Follow the steps below to feel better as quickly as possible.



What to expect:

- There is an incision under your jaw in a skin crease in the upper neck.
- You will have a plastic drain in your neck which will be removed either the following day or a few days later.
- You will go home either the same day or stay one night in hospital.
- You may go home with a drain (plastic tube) in your neck and return a few days later to have the drain removed.
- It is usual to feel tired after surgery. Some of this tiredness is due to the operation and some is due to the general anaesthetic. Rest up, get some light daily exercise and the tiredness will quickly resolve.

Activity:

- Do not drive in the 24 hours following your surgery.
- Dr Hall recommends taking 1-2 weeks off work following excision of the submandibular gland.
- Rest when you feel tired. Getting enough sleep will help you recover.
- Walk each day. Start by walking a little more than you did the day before. Bit by bit, increase the amount you walk.
- In order to reduce the chance of bleeding, avoid strenuous activities, such as bicycle riding, jogging, weight lifting, or aerobic exercise, for 1-2 weeks.
- Refrain from heavy lifting (greater than 7kg) in the first 2 weeks following surgery.

Diet:

- Resume your regular diet, there are no dietary restrictions.

Shower/ bathing:

- Please keep the incision dry and shower from the neck down for the first two days after surgery. You may shower or bath as usual two days after the drain is removed.

Pain medicines:

- Any pain is usually mild to moderate. Severe pain is not expected.
- Take pain medicines exactly as directed (Dr Hall will prescribe).
- If you think your pain medicine is making you sick to your stomach:
 - Take your pain medicine after meals (unless Dr Hall has told you not to).
 - Ask Dr Hall for a different pain medicine.

Incision care:

- Your wound is covered with Steri Strips. Steri Strips are thin adhesive strips which are placed over your incision to help it heal. You should avoid scrubbing or rubbing the incision site. Leave the Steri Strips in place until they fall off on their own. They will usually fall off the skin within 10 to 14 days. Try to keep them dry as much as possible to prevent infection.
- Your stitches are below the skin (subcuticular) and are dissolvable.
- Keep your incision dry until two days after your drain is removed. Two days after the drain is removed you can get the incision wet. Remember to pat the incision dry after you shower and not to rub the incision.
- Keep sun off your wound for 6 months. This helps to prevent the wound going a dark colour (post inflammatory hyperpigmentation). There are three ways to keep the sun off the wound: wear clothing that covers the area, use sunblock, or simply cover the wound with tape. Dr Hall recommends ½ inch light brown micropore tape (a 3M product). You can buy this product from most pharmacies.

If the submandibular gland is removed, will I make enough saliva?

- After excision of the submandibular gland, you will still make enough saliva. There are six big salivary glands and multiple little salivary glands. Losing one salivary gland makes no difference to the amount of saliva you make. The other salivary glands simply make a little more saliva. The only exception to this is if your mouth is always dry before the operation, losing one salivary gland will likely make things worse. However, for most people losing one salivary gland makes no difference at all.

Problems:

- A mild weakness of the lower lip may occur and usually resolves within 1-2 months.
- A weakness of the tongue on the same side of the surgery is very uncommon.
- Sometimes a change in taste and sensation on the same side of the tongue and the area under the tongue may occur. It is not common and usually resolves within 1-2 months.

When do I get my results?

- Usually, the pathologist sends a typed signed report to Dr Hall about one to two weeks after the surgery. Occasionally it may take the pathologist longer to issue a report either because of the complexity of your case or because of a higher than usual workload. Dr Hall will contact you by phone or text once he receives the pathologist's report in his inbox.

Follow up appointment:

- Dr Hall usually sees his submandibular gland excision patients 1-2 weeks after surgery. His nurses will arrange your follow up appointment for you. If you have not heard from Rebecca or Becky within one week of your surgery, please contact them on 09 281 2963.

Things to look out for:

- If the area under your jaw becomes more swollen call Dr Francis Hall on 021 733 677.
- If your incision is getting more sore, or more red over a few days call Dr Hall.

Any problems call or text Dr Francis Hall on 021 733 677

Dr.  T. Hall