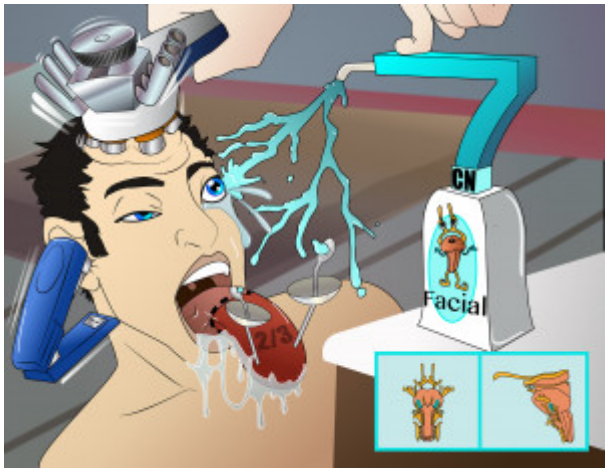
CN VII

CN VII is also known as the facial nerve and it has both motor and sensory functions. The nerve provides taste sensation from the anterior 2/3 of the tongue. Motor functions of the nerve include control of the muscles of facial expression, the stapedius muscle in the middle ear, and closing of the eyelid.



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Facial Nerve
Face-lotion
The nucleus of the facial nerve is located in the brainstem between the pons and medulla. It is named the facial nerve because of its motor and sensory functions in the face. The nerve passes through the internal auditory meatus and then the parotid gland in the face. It can be damaged during surgery for head and neck cancers.

Lacrimation
Crying
CN VII provides parasympathetic innervation to the lacrimal gland which secretes tears.

Salivation
Drooling
The chorda tympani branch of CN VII provides parasympathetic innervation to the submandibular and sublingual glands which are responsible for salivation.

Sensory
Sensor
Along with CN IX, CN VII is most responsible sensing taste.

Taste from Anterior 2/3 of Tongue
Anterior 2/3 of Tongue with Taste-sensors
The chorda tympani branch of CN VII is responsible for taste sensation for the anterior 2/3 of the tongue via the fungiform and foliate papillae.

Motor
Motor
CN VII is responsible for various motor functions of the face, such as facial
expression and secretion of tears and saliva.

Facial Movement
Facial Massage
When testing for CN VII damage, facial movement is assessed by asking the patient to smile (and show teeth), frown, puff out his/her cheeks against the examiner’s pressure. Bell’s palsy is an idiopathic facial nerve paralysis which manifests as ipsilateral facial paralysis and inability to close the ipsilateral eye.

Stapedius Muscle
Stapler
CN VII innervates the stapedius muscle in the middle ear which stabilizes the stapes and prevents sounds from being too loud.

Eyelid Closing
Eyelid Closed
When testing for CN VII damage the patient is asked to close his/her eyes as the examiner exerts opposing pressure to open them. Note: CN III is responsible for eyelid opening.

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