

Hypoglossal nerve

The hypoglossal [nerve](#) is the twelfth [cranial nerve](#) XII, and innervates muscles of the [tongue](#). The name hypoglossus springs from the fact that its passage is below the tongue, hypo meaning “under”, and glossus meaning “tongue”, both of which are from Ancient Greek. The nerve is involved in controlling tongue movements required for [speech](#), food manipulation (i.e. formation of bolus), and [swallowing](#).

The hypoglossal (with or without grafts) and masseter nerves are frequently used as axon donors for facial reinnervation when no proximal stump of the [facial nerve](#) is available.

see [Hypoglossal nerve facial nerve neurorrhaphy](#).

Pathology

see [Hypoglossal nerve injury](#).

Palsy of the hypoglossal nerve is frequently associated with other cranial nerve palsies and can be related to vascular, neoplastic, infectious or traumatic conditions. Isolated hypoglossal nerve palsy is quite rare and very few cases have been reported in the literature to date ¹⁾.

Intracranial juxtafacet (ganglion and synovial) cysts compressing the hypoglossal nerve should be considered in the differential diagnosis with other lesions of this region ²⁾.

see [Atlanto-occipital joint cyst](#)

¹⁾

Patro SN, Torres C, Riascos R. An unusual case of isolated hypoglossal nerve palsy secondary to osteophytic projection from the atlanto-occipital joint. *Neuroradiol J*. 2014 Jun;27(3):361-4. doi: 10.15274/NRJ-2014-10039. Epub 2014 Jun 17. PMID: 24976205; PMCID: PMC4202889.

²⁾

Giordano M, Gerganov VM, Samii A, Samii M. Intradural extraneural bilobate ganglion cyst of the atlanto-occipital joint compressing the hypoglossal nerve. *J Clin Neurosci*. 2012 Mar;19(3):472-3. doi: 10.1016/j.jocn.2011.04.035. Epub 2012 Jan 25. PMID: 22277565.

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