



For questions or emergency care, please contact us at 985-327-5905.

Inflamed Spit (Salivary) Glands

Chronic Sialadenitis (or Sialoadenitis) is chronic inflammation of one or several of the salivary (spit) glands. A person suffering from this condition will often present with painful swelling of the cheeks or neck at the location of one of the major salivary glands (parotid and/or submandibular glands) and may even run fever; Swelling and pain may become more severe or noticeable when eating. This condition can occur for many reasons - including infection, structure of the outflow duct, stones in the gland, autoimmune disease, radiation, injury, tumor obstruction, etc. No matter the cause, there are relatively easy maneuvers that a person suffering from this condition can do to decrease the current inflammation and potentially prevent future episodes of inflammation.

At-home/conservative treatment:

1. Hydration - One of the most common causes of chronic sialadenitis is dehydration. Gatorade© or Powerade© type drinks are better than water, so drink up.
 - a. CAREFUL! - If you are a heart patient or suffer from congestive heart failure, check with your cardiologist on the amount of fluids you can safely consume.
2. Sialagogues (Secretagogues) - This refers to anything that causes your spit glands to secrete saliva and increases salivary flow. This is highly beneficial in someone that has inflammation of the gland as this will help flush the mediators of that inflammation and/or infection from the gland. Examples of sialagogues are lemon wedges, sour candies, and pickles.
 - a. One common recommendation is to bite into and suck on a lemon wedge once every hour while awake until the swelling/inflammation begins to improve.
3. Massage - This sounds simple, but it works. One should gently massage the swollen gland with his/her fingertips in an effort to "milk" the gland of retained and stagnant saliva. It helps to do this from the back of the gland to the opening of the mouth.
4. Warm Compresses - By applying warm compresses, one can increase salivary flow as well as provide some relief from the pain associated with the gland's inflammation.
 - a. CAREFUL! - Make sure that whatever method you choose to use that you don't burn yourself or set any surrounding objects on fire. Special care should be taken if you choose to use a heating pad so that you don't have it too hot or fall asleep with it directly on your skin as there is risk of causing a burn to the overlying skin or starting a fire.
5. Good Oral Hygiene - Bad teeth or poor oral hygiene can allow ones oral cavity to harbor harmful bacteria. These bacteria can infect the salivary glands. So brush and floss those teeth regularly.
6. Avoid Positive Airway Pressure (PAP) – APAP/BiPAP/CPAP are common therapies for obstructive sleep apnea and nightly usage should be encouraged. However, it may be helpful to decrease usage until the acute sialadenitis episode resolves.

If the above maneuvers don't work quickly, seek medical evaluation. There is potential for developing a severe infection and even an abscess (collection of pus) that would require antibiotic medication and/or surgical drainage.