



GEORGIA  
CENTER *for*  
Ear, Nose & Throat  
FACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY

## EXCISION OF A NECK MASS

(ie. Lymph Node, Branchial Cleft Cyst)

**Purpose:** Neck masses can occur from a number of causes. The most common cause is an enlarged lymph node. Lymph nodes can enlarge from infection. They can also enlarge due to replacement by tumor. The lymph node is removed to determine the cause of the enlargement. Neck masses can also be caused by cysts. The cyst is left over from fetal development. The cyst should be removed to prevent it from becoming infected. It is possible to develop tumors originating from nerves, fat, or muscle. These tumors can be benign or malignant.

**Procedure:** Removal of the neck mass is done in a hospital. Local or general anesthesia can be used depending on the age of the patient, and the location of the neck mass. An incision will be made over the mass, the surrounding tissues will be dissected free, and the mass excised. The incision will then be carefully sewn closed. If necessary a drain will be placed to prevent formation of a blood clot. The patient will then go to the recovery room. Most patients will be able to go home the same day. Patients with more extensive procedures may need to stay overnight. Patients can resume a regular diet immediately after the surgery.

**Recovery:** After discharge patients should rest at home with the head elevated. This minimizes swelling, pain, and bleeding. There will be some pain, but a narcotic will be prescribed to minimize discomfort. The incision should be cleansed with peroxide twice a day. A light coating of antibiotic ointment (Neosporin, Polysporin, etc.) is then applied to speed healing. The sutures will be removed during your first post-op visit one week after the surgery. Most patients can resume most of their normal activity after one week. The incision will be noticeable at first, but as the months go by it should settle down to a fine white line which should camouflage nicely with the natural creases of the neck.