



Understanding the clinical side of your diagnosis helps you communicate effectively with your medical team and track your recovery progress objectively over time.

Understanding the 7th Cranial Nerve

The facial nerve controls the muscles of facial expression, taste on the front two-thirds of the tongue, and tear/saliva production. When inflamed, it swells within the narrow bony canal of the skull, cutting off signals to facial muscles.

The House-Brackmann Grading Scale

Doctors use this internationally recognized scale to evaluate the severity of facial paralysis.

GRADE	DESCRIPTION	VISIBLE SYMPTOMS
I	Normal	Normal facial function in all areas.
II	Mild Dysfunction	Slight weakness noticeable on close inspection. Complete eye closure with minimal effort.
III	Moderate Dysfunction	Obvious, but not disfiguring, difference between sides. Complete eye closure with effort.
IV	Moderately Severe	Obvious weakness and/or disfiguring asymmetry. Incomplete eye closure.
V	Severe Dysfunction	Only barely perceptible motion. Incomplete eye closure, slight movement of the corner of the mouth.
VI	Total Paralysis	No movement whatsoever.

Tracking Your Progress

- **Video Logging:** Take a short video of yourself once a week performing five movements: raising eyebrows, closing eyes tightly, smiling with teeth, puckering lips, and flaring nostrils.
- **Patience:** Nerves heal at a rate of roughly 1-2 millimeters per day. Do not expect daily visible changes; measure progress week by week.

