

The exact incidence of Frey syndrome is unknown. The disorder most often occurs as a complication of the surgical removal of a parotid gland (parotidectomy). The percentage of individuals who develop Frey syndrome after a parotidectomy is controversial and reported estimates range from 30-50 percent. In follow-up examinations, approximately 15 percent of affected individuals rated their symptoms as severe. Frey syndrome affects males and females in equal numbers. A diagnosis of Frey syndrome is made based upon identification of characteristic symptoms, a detailed patient history, a thorough clinical evaluation and a specialized test called the Minor Iodine-Starch Test. During this test, an iodine solution is applied to the affected areas of the face. Then, a starch powder such as corn starch is applied over the iodine solution. Individuals are then given an oral stimulus usually a highly acidic food such as a lemon wedge. In affected individuals, discoloration (usually purple) due to excessive sweating occurs on the affected areas.