

Q20 – Tongue: Parts and Innervation

Definition Note

The tongue is a muscular organ situated in the floor of the oral cavity. It plays an important role in mastication, deglutition, speech, and taste. It is composed of skeletal muscle covered by mucous membrane and supplied by complex nerve innervation.

Parts of the Tongue

The tongue is divided into anterior two-thirds (oral part) and posterior one-third (pharyngeal part) by a V-shaped sulcus terminalis.

Anterior Two-Thirds

This part lies in the oral cavity and contains papillae such as filiform, fungiform, and circumvallate papillae. It is concerned with mastication, speech, and taste.

Posterior One-Third

This part lies in the oropharynx and contains lymphoid tissue forming the lingual tonsil. It plays a role in swallowing and immune defense.

Innervation of the Tongue

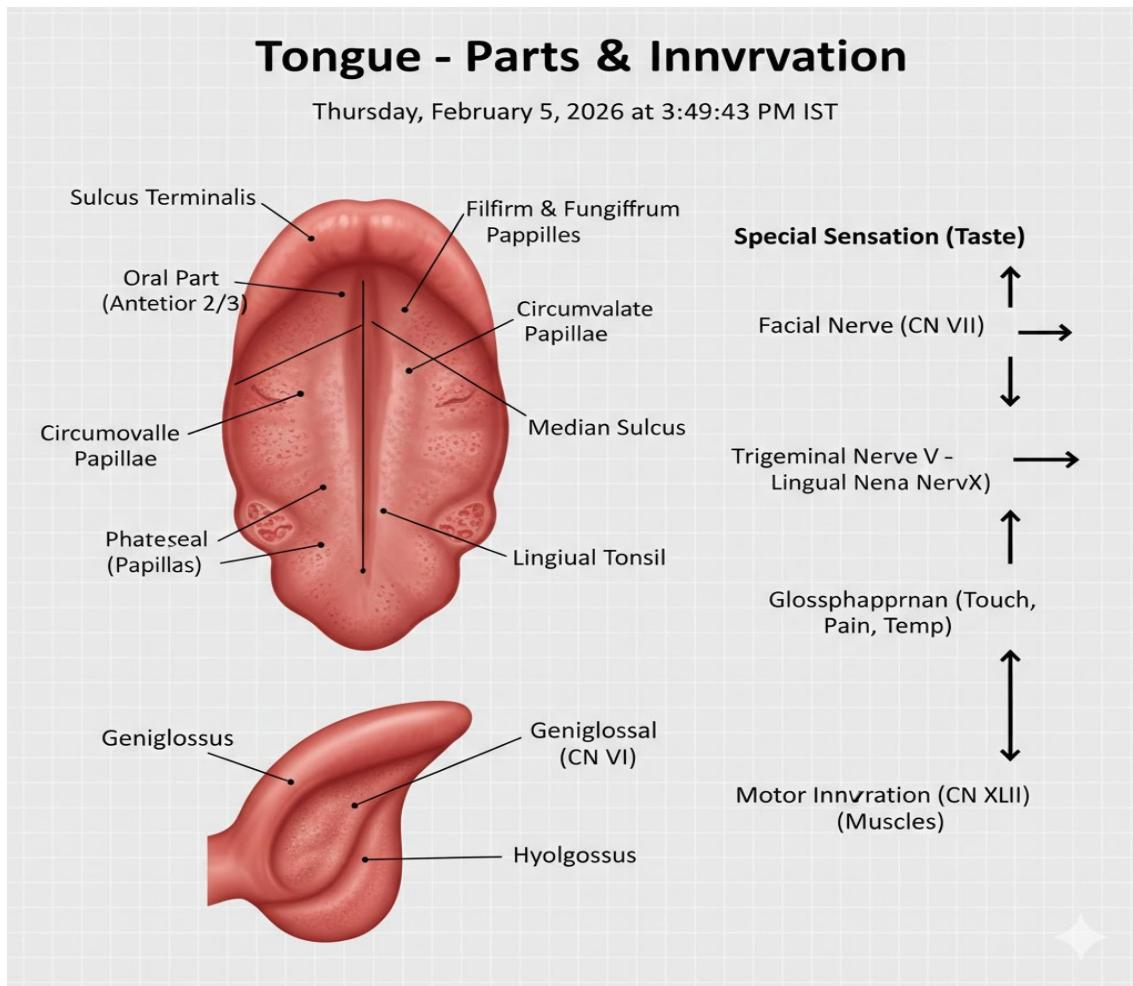
Motor innervation is mainly by hypoglossal nerve (CN XII), except palatoglossus which is supplied by vagus nerve. General sensation of anterior two-thirds is by lingual nerve, while taste is by chorda tympani nerve. Posterior one-third is supplied by glossopharyngeal nerve.

Clinical Importance

Injury to hypoglossal nerve causes deviation of tongue towards the affected side.

Glossopharyngeal nerve lesions cause loss of taste and sensation from posterior one-third of tongue.

Labeled Diagram – Tongue (Parts and Innervation)



Conclusion: The tongue has complex anatomy and nerve supply due to its developmental origin from different pharyngeal arches. Knowledge of its parts and innervation is essential in clinical practice.