

Lightning Learning: Inferior Alveolar Nerve

STOP!

The inferior alveolar nerve (IAN) is a branch of the **mandibular nerve**. It enters the body of the mandible via the mandibular foramen and exits anteriorly between the apices of the lower premolar teeth via the mental foramen to continue anteriorly as the mental nerve.

The IAN is a mixed nerve:

- **Sensory** - to the lower lip, chin and teeth
- **Motor** - to mylohyoid and anterior belly of digastric

Can be injured during wisdom teeth removal, dental implant placement and from trauma and related mandibular fractures.

LOOK

Up to 56% of Mandibular fractures have an IAN paresthesia ^{1,2}

ALWAYS assess and clearly document IAN status when **examining patients with mandibular fractures**.

IAN nerve involvement causes loss of ipsilateral loss of sensation to the lower:

- Teeth
- Lip and Chin
- Anterior two thirds of the tongue

Anaesthesia injected near the mandibular foramen can effectively block the inferior alveolar nerve and the closely related lingual nerve (supplying the tongue).

LEARN

References

1. IAN in Trauma
<https://bit.ly/38RV8s2>
2. IAN Injuries
<https://bit.ly/2UDkDog>

Further Reading

- Inferior Alveolar Nerve
<https://bit.ly/3kBMQ9B>

