

Trigeminal Neuralgia, Bell's Palsy, and Other Cranial Nerve Disorders

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The cranial nerves consist of 12 paired nerves that mediate variable combinations of motor, sensory, and autonomic functions. They are considered as a group because of their close anatomic relationship to the brainstem ([Fig. 441-1](#)) and to one another, and tendency to be involved together in a variety of disease states. Nine cranial nerves connect directly with brainstem nuclei; the exceptions are cranial nerves 1 (olfactory) and 2 (optic) that are more accurately considered fiber tracts of the brain, and cranial nerve 11 (spinal accessory) whose motor neurons reside largely in the upper cervical cord. Analogous to spinal nerves ([Chap. 442](#)), motor fibers of the cranial nerves have their origin in the brainstem or upper cervical cord, while sensory nerves are pseudounipolar, with ganglia outside the central nervous system and a synapse with second-order fibers in the brainstem.