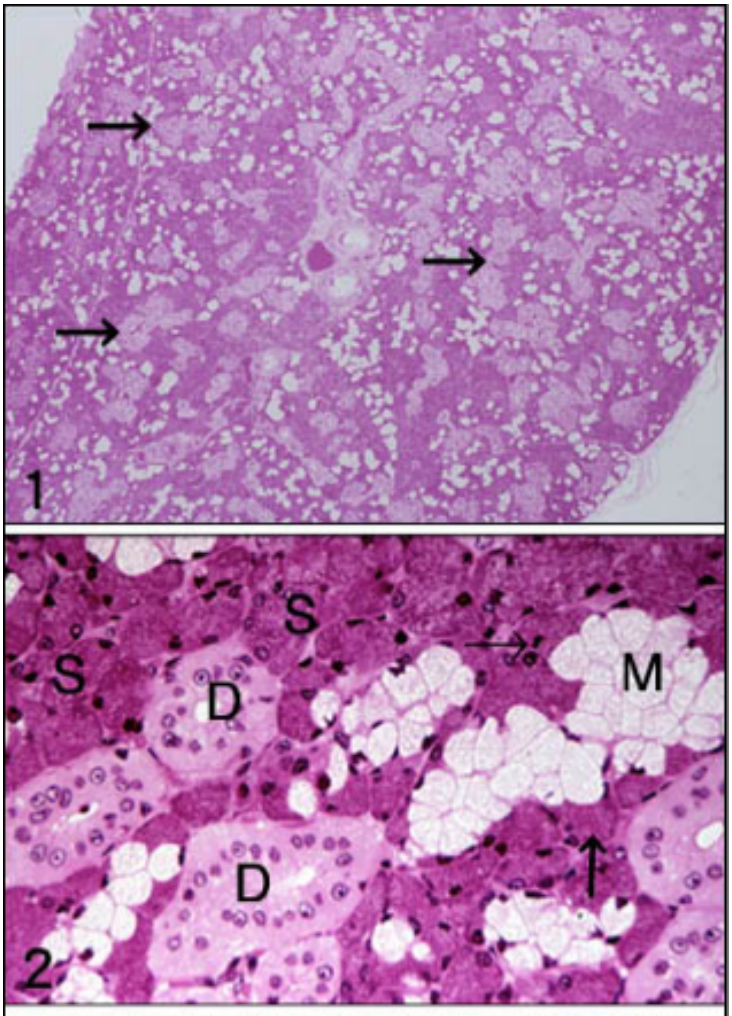
Submandibular Gland



1. Submandibular Gland. Note the abundance of striated ducts (arrows).
2. Submandibula gland illustrating serous acini (S), striated ducts (D), mucous tubules (M), and demilunes (arrows).

The submandibular gland, like the parotid, is a compound tubuloacinar gland and has a fibrous capsule with septa, lobes, lobules, myoepithelial cells, and a prominent duct system. It is a mixed gland, with the majority of the secretory units being serous in humans. The mucous tubules present usually show serous demilunes (crescents) at their blind ends. Small channels, the intercellular secretory canaliculi, pass between the mucous cells and extend between the serous cells of the demilune. Thus, the secretory product of the demilunes has direct access to the lumen of the mucous tubule. Myoepithelial cells lie between the secretory cells and the basement membrane and invest the secretory units as well as the initial portions of the ductal system. Generally, the duct system is similar to that of the parotid, but the striated ducts are much longer and hence more conspicuous in sections of the submandibular gland. The major excretory duct of each submandibular gland empties onto the floor of the oral cavity on either side of the lingual frenulum.

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