

### Five paired skeletal muscles of the soft palate:

1. **Palatoglossus** muscle: pulls the root of the tongue upward and backward. Both muscles contracting together cause the palatoglossal arches to approach the midline, and thus the opening (oropharyngeal isthmus) between the oral pharynx and the mouth is narrowed.
2. **Palatopharyngeus** muscle: pulls the walls of the pharynx upward. Acting together, the muscles pull the palatopharyngeal arches toward the midline.
3. **Levator veli palatini** muscle: raises the soft palate.
4. **Tensor veli palatini** muscle: the two muscles tighten the soft palate so that it may be moved upward or downward as a tense sheet. This muscle curves around the pterygoid hamulus. Therefore, if the **hamulus was fractured**, the actions of this muscle would be affected. Both tensor and levator veli palatini muscles prevent food from entering the nasal cavity by elevating the soft palate.
5. **Uvular** muscle: raises and shortens the uvula to help seal the oropharynx from the nasopharynx.

**Important:** All the paired skeletal muscles of the soft palate are innervated by the pharyngeal plexus **except** the **tensor veli palatini**, which is innervated by a branch of the **nerve to the medial pterygoid**, which is a branch of the mandibular division of the trigeminal nerve (V3).



1. The anterior zone of the palatal submucosa contains fat, while the posterior zone contains mucous glands.
2. The salivary glands of the **hard** palate are located in the posterolateral zone. They arise from ectoderm and are separated by connective tissue septa.