



Advice if you are having Vocal Fold Surgery (Microlaryngoscopy)

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This leaflet provides information for patients undergoing microlaryngoscopy as a result of their Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) consultation.

Microlaryngoscopy means a surgical examination of the larynx (voice box) under general anaesthetic. The aim of microlaryngoscopy is to find out in more detail what is wrong with your larynx and vocal cords, and if possible to try to improve your voice.

It is likely that you will be asleep for about 45 minutes during the procedure. The anaesthetist will talk to you about the anaesthetic on the day of the operation.

Risks of vocal fold surgery

Your consultant will discuss the specific risks with you prior to your operation. In general you should be aware of the following:

- There is a small risk of damage to your teeth or mouth, because of the instruments used to help you to breathe during the operation
- There is a risk your voice may be no better or possibly worse after surgery
- You will possibly wake up with a sore throat, but this should only last for a day or two. You will be advised on suitable painkillers whilst in hospital

Before coming into hospital for your surgery:

- Avoid things which are known to irritate the vocal folds e.g. smoke, alcohol and caffeine
- If you have been prescribed reflux medication make sure you take it as prescribed
- Avoid vocally abusive habits e.g. throat clearing, shouting
- Plan to have voice rest after your operation
- Warn your friends and family that you will not be able to speak for at least **48 hours**

- Arrange to have time off work – you may need up to two weeks depending on the job you do
- Have a pad and pen available to write things down. Bring it with you to the hospital
- Aim to drink around two litres of water throughout the day
- Inhale plain steam at least once but preferably twice a day

Immediately after your microlaryngoscopy and for the first two days:

- Do not talk or whisper, laugh out loud, sing, cough or clear your throat. Use a notepad and a pen to communicate during this time
- Drink plenty of fluids, avoiding caffeinated or alcoholic drinks, which dry out your vocal folds
- Take steam inhalations regularly, preferably 4-5 times a day for 10 minutes at a time
- Do not smoke. Avoid smoky atmospheres
- Do not answer the telephone; ask people to text or email instead
- Avoid heavy lifting, pushing and pulling including gym and aerobic activity

You may eat and drink normally after the operation.

The operation itself will probably be done as a day case, so you should be able to go home on the same day.

For the next week or two:

After the first two days of complete vocal rest, unless advised otherwise, it is important you start using your voice again. Gradually increase the amount of talking you do. This will actually help your vocal cords to begin working properly again and encourage further healing.

It is important that you:

- Speak no louder than a soft conversational volume
- Speak less often than usual, and gradually increase the amount you use your voice each day
- Do not shout, clear your throat, cough unnecessarily, laugh loudly, whisper, raise your voice, or sing
- Try to avoid using the phone, and if you do use it keep the conversation short
- Try to have short periods of voice rest between speaking
- Keep drinking fluids
- Keep steaming twice a day
- Take time each day to relax

The vocal cords may take 6-8 weeks to fully heal after microlaryngoscopy, so over this time, you should treat your voice with care.

Contacting us

If you need further advice in the period until you are seen back in ENT Outpatients, please contact the Voice Team in the Speech and Language Therapy Department on **0121 371 3483**.

Post: Speech and Language Therapy Department
Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Mindelsohn Way
Edgbaston
Birmingham, B15 2GW

Email: slt.uhb@nhs.net

Speech and Language Therapy
Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2GW
Telephone: 0121 371 3483
