Contact details
If you have any questions you should contact the ENT ward:

Your clinical nurse specialist:

Your speech and language therapist:

Local sources of further information
You can visit any of the health/cancer information centres listed below:

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust
The Courtyard Centre
Sandwell General Hospital (Main Reception)
Lyndon, West Bromwich B71 4HJ
Telephone: 0121 507 3792
Fax: 0121 507 3816

University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust
The Patrick Room, Cancer Centre
Heritage Building, (Queen Elizabeth Hospital)
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TH
Telephone: 0121 371 3539

The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm or call 0121 371 4323.

Oncology
Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2GW
Telephone: 0121 627 2000

UHB is a no smoking Trust
To see all of our current patient information leaflets please visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm
Introduction

You will have been offered this treatment because you have laryngeal cancer (cancer of the voice box). This booklet has been written to answer questions you, or those who care for you, may have about laser surgery to the larynx. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your surgeon but helps you to understand more about what is discussed.

What is laser?

Laser is a powerful beam of light which can be used for very precise surgical work or for cutting through tissue. Laser uses high-intensity light to treat cancer and other illnesses. It can also be used to shrink or destroy tumours.

How is laser surgery performed?

Laser surgery is often given through an endoscope (a thin, lighted tube used to look inside the body) which is inserted through the mouth. Laser light is then aimed precisely to destroy or shrink the tumour. Laser surgery can be repeated several times if necessary for cancer treatment.

Before your operation

You will have a chance to discuss any concerns you have with your consultant surgeon and nursing staff at the pre-operative assessment clinic. Specific information on your admission time to hospital and directions about food and fluid intake before your operation will also be given. If you still have questions regarding your admission to hospital or about the procedure please contact your clinical nurse specialist. You will have a chance to ask more questions before the operation and will be asked to sign a consent form. You may receive laser surgery as a day case procedure or you may be asked to stay in hospital overnight.

During and after your operation

Laser surgery is performed in the operating theatre under general anaesthetic (put to sleep). This allows the surgeon to see the area of the voice box to be lasered. You will receive painkillers to be swallowed as part of your anaesthetic and you may have more painkillers if you need them on your return to the ward.

After the operation, you will return to the day surgery unit or the ENT (ear, nose and throat) ward. When you are ready to leave the hospital, you will be given specific post-operative advice. The nursing staff will also give you information on your next appointment with the surgeon.

Following your operation

Your voice

One of the potential side-effects of laser surgery is deterioration in voice quality. It is unlikely your voice will return to its original functioning before the operation. It is essential that you see a speech and language therapist for voice therapy both before and after the operation. You will be given the name and contact number for the speech and language therapist before you come into hospital. Following your operation, you should rest your voice completely for 48 hours. The speech and language therapist will give you some exercises to do and will arrange follow-up appointments after your discharge.

Eating and drinking

You will be able to eat and drink after the treatment once you are fully awake. Some patients require painkillers for a short time to enable them to eat comfortably.

Swelling of tissues in the voice box

Rarely, patients experience some swelling of the tissues in the voice box following laser surgery. This can make breathing a little more difficult at first. If this is the case, you will be advised to stay in hospital until the swelling has decreased and it is safe for you to travel home.