

Referral to Speech and Language Therapy for Vocal Cord Palsy

Information and advice for patients

Speech and Language Therapy

Your consultant ENT surgeon has diagnosed you as having vocal cord palsy, which means that one of your two vocal cords is not working. Vocal cord palsy can be temporary or permanent.

You have been referred to the Speech and Language Therapy Department for advice and therapy to help you to achieve the most efficient voice possible. This is always the first course of treatment offered for vocal cord palsy.

How can speech and language therapy help?

Your Speech and Language Therapist can give you exercises which can help the 'weak' cord to start working again or help the 'working' vocal cord to compensate. In most cases a good voice will be achieved. However, in some cases the voice will not recover and surgical options may be considered but speech and language therapy is still useful to help you achieve the most efficient voice possible.

Your first appointment

You will be invited to attend an initial appointment where the speech and language therapist will assess your voice and, if appropriate, recommend a course of voice therapy.

Before you receive your appointment

You will be sent a letter with an appointment to see a Speech and Language Therapist, but in the meantime here is some general advice that may help to improve your voice:

1. Take care when eating and drinking, take small amounts slowly to avoid coughing or choking episodes.
2. If you are a smoker, stop smoking.
3. Give your voice short rest periods. You may find your voice fatigues with use, so plan your day; if you need your voice for a meeting rest it beforehand.
4. Avoid straining your voice, so turn the radio or TV down before speaking and avoid trying to shout from room to room or from downstairs to upstairs.
5. Make sure people can see your face when talking and that you have their attention before you start.
6. Keep well hydrated by drinking 6-8 glasses of water/squash a day.
7. Good posture will help you produce a better voice so try to sit or stand up straight and keep your neck and shoulders relaxed.

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Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Speech and Language Therapy Department on:

0121 507 4475

Monday – Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm

Outside of these hours, or if no one is available to take your call, you can leave a message on the answerphone.

Further information

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites www.swbh.nhs.uk and www.swbhengage.com or follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and Facebook www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs.

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- Harris et al, 'Voice clinic handbook', 1998
- Green and Mathieson, 'The voice and its disorders', June 2001
- The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, Clinical guidelines, 2005

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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