

# Referral to speech and language therapy for voice difficulties

Information and advice for patients

## *Speech and Language Therapy*

You have been referred to the Speech and Language Therapy Department by your consultant ENT surgeon because you have been experiencing one or more of the following problems:

- Hoarseness
- Total voice loss
- Discomfort in the throat
- Difficulty raising your voice
- Difficulty singing

### **What to expect**

You will be put on the speech and language therapy waiting list and in the meantime you will receive a letter asking you to complete and return some questionnaires. It is important you return these promptly to ensure an appointment is arranged as soon as possible. We normally have a waiting list of less than 12 weeks but if you have not heard from us please contact us on the number on the back of this leaflet.

### **Your first appointment**

You will be invited to attend an initial consultation when the speech and language therapist will assess your voice, discuss possible causes of the problems you are experiencing and, if appropriate, recommend a course of voice therapy.

This will involve explaining how the voice works, voice care advice and a range of exercises to establish and maintain your voice, which you will be expected to practise at home.

If you agree to attend for treatment the speech and language therapist will arrange further appointments with you.

### **How you can help your voice**

While you are waiting for your appointment you can help your voice by following this advice:

- Try to talk calmly and slowly.
- Reduce background noise when talking (e.g. turn TV/radio down).
- Talk face to face with people over a short distance.
- Drink plenty of water (6-8 glasses per day).
- Stop smoking.

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### Avoid:

- Excessive throat clearing.
- Shouting/raising your voice.
- Using a forced whisper.
- Eating very spicy or acidic foods.

### 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](http://www.swbh.nhs.uk) and [www.swbhengage.com](http://www.swbhengage.com) or follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and Facebook [www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs](http://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](mailto:swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net)



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