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The Royal Liverpool
and Broadgreen
University Hospitals
NHS Trust

Patient information

Muscle Tension Dysphonia

Therapies Speciality

What is Muscle Tension Dysphonia (MTD)?

Muscle Tension Dysphonia (MTD) is a voice disorder caused by excess tension in the muscles that are used to produce voice.

There are two types of MTD:

- Primary MTD – in this type the muscles in your neck are tense when using your voice but there is no abnormality in the larynx ('voice box').
- Secondary MTD – in this type there is an abnormality in the voice box causing you to over-use other muscles to help produce voice.

What are the causes of MTD?

- Upper respiratory infection.
- Acid reflux that reaches the throat, called laryngopharyngeal reflux (LPR).
- Excessive demand placed on your voice.
- Stressful life events.
- Often more than one of these factors contribute to MTD.

What are the symptoms of MTD?

Changes to your voice:

- Your voice may sound husky, hoarse, breathy and/or strained.
- Decreased volume.
- It may feel effortful or difficult to project your voice.
- The voice may sound deeper than usual.
- Voice quality deteriorates with use

Other symptoms:

- Irritation in your throat (for example soreness, burning or tickling sensations).
- Tightness or a sensation of a lump in the throat.
- Frequent throat clearing.
- Increased mucous in the throat.

How will my diagnosis be confirmed?

- You will be seen by a member of the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) team who will examine your vocal cords to see how they are working.
- A Speech and Language Therapist may assist in diagnosing your voice problem and identifying factors that may be causing MTD.

What treatment is available for MTD?

- Voice exercises (e.g. relaxation exercises for the throat).
- Voice care advice.
- Medication for LPR if this is thought to be contributing to MTD.

What can I do to help my symptoms?

- Follow exercises and advice given by the ENT team or your Speech and Language Therapist.

Also try to:

- Avoid overusing your voice, shouting, whispering, excessive use of the telephone or talking over background noise.
- Drink plenty of water and try to keep your intake of caffeinated drinks to a minimum.
- Cut down or give up smoking.
- Avoid alcohol in excess.
- Be aware that dry, smoky or dusty atmospheres can irritate your voice.
- Rest your voice regularly.
- Don't carry on talking when your voice feels or sounds sore or strained.
- See your family doctor (GP) if you think you may have an infection e.g. coughing up green mucous.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

If you have any queries or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact us

Speech and Language Therapy

Voice Therapy

Broadgreen Hospital

Thomas Drive, Liverpool

L14 3LB

Tel: 0151 706 2760

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2760

British Voice Association:

<http://www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk/>

Voice Care Network:

<http://www.voicecare.org.uk/>

Author: Therapies Speciality

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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