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The Royal Liverpool
and Broadgreen
University Hospitals
NHS Trust

Patient information

Vocal Cord Nodules

Therapies Speciality

What are vocal nodules?

- Small bumps (like blisters) which form on the vocal cords as a result of excessive force and rubbing in the same place.
- They develop gradually from slight reddening, to a swelling and then nodules.
- Vocal cord nodules usually form as a pair – one on each vocal cord, opposite each other.

What are the causes of vocal nodules?

- Prolonged and excessive voice use.
- Shouting, straining and screaming.
- Talking over background noise.
- Poor singing technique.
- Excessive coughing and throat clearing.
- Poor voice care, such as not drinking enough water, smoking and acid reflux that comes up to the throat, called laryngopharyngeal reflux (LPR).

What are the symptoms of vocal nodules?

Symptoms depend on the type and size of the nodules. These include:

Voice changes

- Gradual onset of hoarseness, initially now and again but eventually constant.
- Breathy/husky or hoarse voice quality.
- It may feel effortful or difficult to produce voice.
- Voice quality deteriorates with use.
- Lower pitch.

Other symptoms:

- Aching and tiredness of the throat muscles.
- Throat clearing.

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.
- A Speech and Language Therapist may assist in the diagnosis of vocal cord nodules.

What treatment is available for vocal nodules?

- Vocal cord nodules can disappear with voice therapy alone (provided by a Speech and Language Therapist).
- Rarely, surgery may be carried out.

What can I do to help my symptoms?

- Follow exercises and advice given to you by the ENT doctors and Speech and Language Therapist to help reduce your symptoms and improve your voice quality.

You can take the following steps to improve your voice symptoms:**Alter the way you use your voice:**

- Avoid excessive voice use.
- Try not to talk or shout over background noise.
- Rest your voice whenever possible.
- Do not force your voice.

Other suggestions:

- Reduce/ stop smoking.
- Drink plenty of fluids – approximately two litres per day.
- Limit alcoholic, caffeinated and fizzy drinks.
- Avoid dry, dusty and smoky environments as this could irritate your vocal cords.
- Minimise throat clearing and coughing.
- See your family doctor (GP) if you are experiencing acid reflux/heartburn

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

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Voice Care Network:

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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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