

Department of Speech and Language Therapy

Chronic Laryngitis

This leaflet has been written to try and help you understand some of the symptoms you have been experiencing, and to help to answer some of the questions that you may have.

What is Chronic Laryngitis?

Chronic Laryngitis is a long-standing condition in which there is widespread swelling and irritation of the vocal folds. This can lead to a change in how your vocal folds are working and may alter the sound of your voice.

What are the symptoms of Chronic Laryngitis?

The main symptom is usually a change in voice quality. The voice may become hoarse, feel difficult to use (which can be tiring), and will normally deteriorate with use. The pitch of your voice may become lower. Occasionally soreness of the throat is also present.

How will my diagnosis be confirmed?

You will be seen by a member of the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) team who will assess you and decide what is causing your voice problem. A Speech and Language Therapist may also be present and assist in the diagnosis and identification of causal factors.

What causes Chronic Laryngitis?

Several things may cause you to suffer from Chronic Laryngitis:

- Excessive voice use or strain when using your voice.
- Acid reflux - where acid comes up from the stomach and seeps into the larynx (voice box). This can cause severe irritation especially if untreated.
- Smoking and excessive alcohol intake can cause dryness, and lead to irritation of your vocal folds.
- Spending time in atmospheres that are dusty or that have lots of fumes can cause irritation to your vocal folds, especially if this in turn causes frequent coughing or throat clearing.

What treatment is available for Chronic Laryngitis?

If the Chronic Laryngitis has been caused by excessive voice use / voice strain, the Speech and Language Therapist will work with you to improve this. They may give you voice exercises and advice to follow to improve how your voice works.

If acid reflux has contributed to the development of the Chronic Laryngitis then your General Practitioner (GP) or ENT doctor will be able to advise you on how to treat this. If the problem is due to smoking, excess alcohol intake or irritation in your throat then advice can be given on how to alleviate this. You are advised to stop smoking completely and information on how to achieve this can be requested from your General Practitioner (GP).

What can I do to help my symptoms?

It is very important that you follow the advice and exercises given by the ENT team or your Speech and Language Therapist if you want to help your symptoms improve.

Also try to:

- Avoid overusing your voice, shouting, whispering, excessive use of the telephone or talking over background noise
- Drink plenty of fluid and try to keep your intake of caffeinated drinks to a minimum
- Keep smoking and alcohol intake to a minimum or avoid altogether
- Avoid dry, smoky or dusty atmospheres
- Consult your General Practitioner (GP) if you find that you are experiencing acid reflux (heartburn) and they can advise you on treatment options.

If you have any other questions about Chronic Laryngitis please ring your Speech and Language Therapist on 01223 216200 or your Doctor who will be happy to help.



We are currently working towards a smoke-free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact

Patient Information: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



Document history

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