



Excellence in Specialty Care for the Head and Neck ~ A Division of Select Physicians Alliance, PL

Vocal Cord Surgery (Microlaryngoscopy)

You have been scheduled for surgery to remove or biopsy a lesion of the vocal cord(s). The surgery is performed through the mouth while you are under general anesthesia (asleep). A microscope and delicate surgical instruments are used, which allows accurate surgery with minimal surgical trauma to the area. The following instructions should answer most of your questions about what to expect after surgery.

Before the Procedure:

If applicable, you will meet with the speech pathologist to discuss voice use and to design a voice therapy program that you will begin after surgery.

After the Procedure:

- Absolute Voice Rest may be required for 7 Days After Surgery. This means no talking or even whispering. Plan ahead to use non-verbal communication during the first week.*
- Discomfort after surgery is usually limited to a mild sore throat. You will have a prescription for pain medication to use as needed, or you may use Tylenol for minor discomfort. Remember to avoid the medications listed in the Preoperative Instructions.*
- Coughing and throat clearing should be avoided for at least 14 days. If you feel a need to clear secretions from the throat, take a full breath, hold it briefly, and let it all out on a silent "H" sound. This will effectively clear mucus from the throat without harming the vocal cords. The prescription pain medication also works well as a cough suppressant (take as directed).*
- You may have a prescription for antibiotics after surgery. Please be sure to take them until they are gone because they help with the healing process.*
- Be sure to drink plenty of liquids. Cool, clear liquids (water, Gatorade, clear juices) are best.*
- You may advance your diet as tolerated after surgery. Avoid things that are hot or acidic for 5 - 7 days.*
- You may notice some numbness of the tongue. This is from the instruments used to view the vocal cords, and may last a few days after surgery.*
- Although bleeding is usually minimal, you may notice some blood-stained mucus the first day or two after surgery. If it persists or increases, please call the office.*
- If you require Speech Therapy after surgery, your first session will be about 2 weeks after surgery, with other sessions over the next several weeks as required.*



Excellence in Specialty Care for the Head and Neck ~ A Division of Select Physicians Alliance, PL

Stages in Voice Rehabilitation After Microlaryngoscopy

Generally, voice use after vocal cord surgery advances step by step during the healing phase. After the first week of voice rest, the voice will be hoarse but acceptable for limited use. It will improve during the next few weeks. During this time, patience is essential to avoid over-using the voice while it is healing. Singers may benefit from working with a singing coach during recovery.

There will be "good voice days and bad voice days" while the tissues are healing, and this is normal. The healing process is usually complete for conversational voice use by 6 weeks, and for singing or professional speaking requirements by 12 weeks.

The following guidelines will give you an idea of what to expect during the healing period.

Postoperative Voice Recovery:		
<i>Stage I</i>	<i>Week 1</i>	<i>Absolute voice rest (no talking or whispering)</i>
<i>Stage II</i>	<i>Week 2</i>	<i>Begin restricted voice use (voice use only when necessary)</i>
<i>Stage III</i>	<i>Weeks 3-5</i>	<i>Increased speaking (quiet conversational voice use, longer duration)</i>
<i>Stage IV</i>	<i>Weeks 5-6</i>	<i>Full voice speaking May begin singing exercises</i>
<i>Stage V</i>	<i>Weeks 6-8</i>	<i>Increased vocalization in singing voice (focus on technique and relaxation)</i>
<i>Stage VI</i>	<i>Weeks 8-10 Weeks 10-12</i>	<i>Limited repertoire work Move to full singing voice</i>