

Patient Information

Laryngitis

What is Laryngitis?

Laryngitis is when your voice box (larynx) becomes irritated or inflamed, often making your voice sound hoarse, scratchy, or even causing you to lose your voice completely. It is commonly caused by a viral infection, like a cold, or by using your voice too much.

What Causes Laryngitis?

Laryngitis can happen for several reasons, including:

- **Viral Infections:** Most cases are caused by viruses, like the common cold or flu.
 - **Bacterial Infections:** Less common, but bacteria can also cause laryngitis.
 - **Straining Your Voice:** Yelling, singing, or talking too much can irritate your voice box.
 - **Irritants:** Smoke, chemicals, or pollution can cause throat irritation.
 - **Acid Reflux (GORD):** Stomach acid can back up into your throat, causing inflammation.
 - **Allergies:** Pollen, dust, or pet dander can also irritate the larynx.
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What Are the Symptoms?

Laryngitis often causes:

- **Hoarseness:** Your voice may sound rough, weak, or raspy.
 - **Lost Voice:** You may not be able to speak at all.
 - **Sore Throat:** A scratchy or painful throat.
 - **Coughing:** A dry, persistent cough may develop.
 - **Throat Irritation:** A feeling of something stuck in your throat or tightness.
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How is Laryngitis Diagnosed?

Most of the time, your doctor can diagnose laryngitis by simply asking about your symptoms and looking at your throat. If needed, they may use a small camera

(laryngoscopy) to check your vocal cords, especially if the hoarseness lasts more than two weeks.

How Can Laryngitis Be Treated?

Here's how you can help yourself feel better:

1. Rest Your Voice

Try not to talk, whisper, or shout. Resting your voice helps your throat heal.

2. Stay Hydrated

Drink plenty of fluids, especially warm drinks like tea with honey. This helps soothe your throat.

3. Pain Relief

Over-the-counter pain relievers like ibuprofen or acetaminophen can ease throat pain and reduce swelling.

4. Use a Humidifier

A humidifier or inhaling steam can help keep your throat moist and feel more comfortable.

5. Avoid Irritants

Stay away from smoke, dust, chemicals, and dry air to avoid further irritation.

6. Medication

If your laryngitis is caused by a bacterial infection, your doctor may prescribe antibiotics. If you have acid reflux or allergies, treatment for those conditions may also help.

Possible Risks and Complications

- **Persistent Hoarseness:** If you keep using your voice too much or if laryngitis lasts more than two weeks, it could lead to ongoing hoarseness.
 - **Vocal Cord Damage:** Continued strain on your voice can cause long-term voice problems, like nodules or polyps.
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How Can You Prevent Laryngitis?

- **Rest Your Voice:** Give your voice a break, especially if you use it a lot.
- **Drink Water:** Keeping your throat hydrated helps prevent irritation.
- **Avoid Smoke and Pollutants:** Stay away from cigarette smoke and other irritants.
- **Treat GORD and Allergies:** If you have acid reflux or allergies, managing these can help prevent laryngitis.

When Should You See a Doctor?

See a doctor if:

- Your hoarseness lasts longer than two weeks.
- You have a severe sore throat or trouble swallowing.
- You're having trouble breathing.
- You develop a fever along with your symptoms.

Summary

What is Laryngitis?	Inflammation of the voice box (larynx) that causes hoarseness or loss of voice.
Causes	Viral infections, vocal strain, irritants (smoke, pollution), acid reflux, allergies
Symptoms	Hoarseness, sore throat, dry cough, loss of voice, throat irritation
Treatment	Rest your voice, drink fluids, take pain relievers, use a humidifier, avoid irritants
Prevention	Avoid vocal strain, stay hydrated, avoid smoke, treat acid reflux and allergies
When to see a doctor	Hoarseness lasting more than 2 weeks, difficulty swallowing, breathing trouble, or fever

Laryngitis usually goes away on its own with simple care. If it doesn't improve or you're worried, don't hesitate to talk to your doctor. With the right treatment, you'll be feeling better soon!