

Patient Information Leaflet

Post-Operative Care and Recovery Following Exploratory Microlaryngoscopy

What is an Exploratory Microlaryngoscopy?

Exploratory microlaryngoscopy is a surgical procedure that allows your ENT (ear, nose, and throat) specialist to examine your voice box (larynx) and vocal folds in detail using a microscope and fine instruments. It is performed under general anaesthetic and is used to investigate persistent voice problems or to diagnose and treat issues such as vocal nodules, cysts, polyps, inflammation, or unexplained hoarseness.

During the procedure:

- A metal scope is gently inserted through your mouth to access the larynx.
 - No external incisions are made.
 - If necessary, small tissue samples (biopsies) may be taken, or minor surgical treatment may be performed at the same time.
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What to Expect After Surgery

Following surgery, it's common to experience:

- **Sore throat or throat irritation** – mild discomfort when swallowing or speaking
- **Hoarseness or changes in voice** – temporary and expected, depending on the findings and any treatment performed
- **Fatigue** – especially from the anaesthetic, usually resolves within 24–48 hours
- **Mild coughing** or a sensation of something in the throat

These symptoms are usually temporary and should gradually improve over several days.

Post-Operative Voice Care Instructions

Proper vocal care is essential for healing and preventing further damage. Your specialist will advise a voice rest period depending on the type and extent of the procedure.

1. Voice Rest

- **Complete voice rest** (no speaking, whispering, throat clearing, or coughing) is usually advised for **2 to 3 days**, or as recommended by your surgeon.
- Avoid whispering, as it places strain on the vocal folds.
- After the rest period, you'll begin **a gradual return to voice use**, often under the guidance of a speech and language therapist.

2. Gentle Communication Alternatives

- Use text, email, writing, or text-to-speech apps to communicate.
- Inform people around you about your voice rest to help reduce pressure to speak.

3. Avoid Vocal Irritants and Strain

- No shouting, prolonged talking, or speaking over background noise.
- Avoid dry, smoky, or dusty environments.
- Do not smoke, and stay away from second-hand smoke.

Supportive Self-Care Tips

- **Hydration:** Sip water regularly throughout the day to keep your vocal folds well-lubricated. Aim for at least 6–8 glasses of water per day.
- **Steam inhalation or humidifier:** Helps soothe the throat and reduce dryness, especially in centrally heated environments.
- **Avoid throat clearing or excessive coughing:** If you feel the urge, swallow gently or sip water instead.
- **Rest your body:** General physical rest supports healing, especially in the first 24–48 hours post-surgery.

Follow-Up Care

- A follow-up appointment will be arranged to discuss the results of the examination and any biopsies taken.
- If your voice problem requires further treatment or rehabilitation, you may be referred to a **speech and language therapist** who specialises in voice care. Therapy may involve techniques to reduce strain, improve vocal technique, and prevent recurrence.

When to Seek Urgent Medical Advice

Contact your healthcare provider or attend the emergency department if you experience any of the following:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - Significant bleeding from the mouth or throat
 - Severe or worsening throat pain
 - High fever or signs of infection (e.g., chills, fatigue, swollen neck glands)
 - Persistent vomiting or inability to eat or drink
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Recovery Timeline

- Most patients recover fully within **7 to 14 days**.
 - You may be able to return to work or regular activities after a few days, depending on your recovery and voice demands.
 - Full voice recovery may take several weeks, especially if treatment was performed during the procedure.
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Remember: Rest, hydrate, and follow your specialist's advice. With proper care, most people return to full vocal function and daily activity without complications.