

## Patient Information

# Post-operative Care and Recovery Following Phonosurgery

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## What is Phonosurgery?

Phonosurgery refers to surgical procedures on the vocal folds (also called vocal cords) aimed at improving voice quality. It is commonly used to treat conditions such as vocal fold nodules, polyps, cysts, sulcus vocalis, scarring, and certain types of vocal fold paralysis or asymmetry.

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## The Goals of Aftercare

After surgery, your vocal folds need time and care to heal properly. The main aims of aftercare are to:

- Promote healing of the delicate vocal tissue
  - Reduce the risk of scarring or vocal fold damage
  - Restore healthy, efficient voice production
  - Support long-term vocal health
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## Immediate Postoperative Care

### 1. Complete Voice Rest

- **Duration:** You will be advised to follow **complete voice rest**, usually for **3 to 7 days** depending on the type of surgery. This means:
  - No speaking, whispering, humming, throat clearing, or coughing if avoidable
  - Use written notes, text messages, or voice-to-text apps to communicate
- Voice rest gives the vocal folds time to heal without friction or pressure.

### 2. Pain and Discomfort

- Mild throat discomfort or irritation is normal after surgery.
- You may take prescribed or over-the-counter pain relief (e.g. paracetamol) if needed.
- Avoid medications that can dry out the throat unless advised (e.g. some antihistamines or decongestants).

### 3. Hydration

- Keep well hydrated by drinking **plenty of water** (6–8 glasses per day).
- Moisture helps keep the vocal folds lubricated and supports healing.
- Consider **steam inhalation or saline nebulisation** as recommended.

### 4. Avoid Throat Irritants

- Do not smoke or expose yourself to secondhand smoke or dusty, dry environments.
- Avoid alcohol and very spicy foods during early recovery.

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## Recovery Timeline

Time After Surgery	Expected Care and Activity
Days 1–7	Complete voice rest; avoid heavy lifting or straining; stay hydrated
Week 2	Gradual reintroduction of voice, under SLT guidance; start gentle vocal warm-ups
Weeks 3–6	Continue voice therapy; increase voice use slowly; avoid shouting or prolonged speaking
6+ weeks	Most patients return to full voice function; follow-up assessment with ENT or SLT

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## Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)

Voice therapy is an essential part of recovery and helps you:

- Learn safe and efficient voice use
- Prevent tension and strain as you return to speaking
- Build stamina and restore your voice quality

You'll usually begin SLT within 1–2 weeks of surgery, once initial healing has occurred. Attendance and participation are key to long-term success.

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## What to Avoid During Recovery

- Speaking or singing before your team gives you the go-ahead
- Whispering (which can be more harmful than speaking)
- Coughing or throat clearing—sip water or swallow instead
- Shouting, loud environments, or long conversations early on
- Smoke, strong fumes, dry air, and allergens

## When to Seek Medical Advice

Contact your ENT team or GP if you experience:

- Severe or increasing pain
  - Fever or signs of infection
  - Bleeding or persistent hoarseness after several weeks
  - Difficulty breathing or swallowing
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## Long-Term Vocal Care

Once your recovery is complete, continue caring for your voice by:

- Staying hydrated
  - Warming up and cooling down before and after voice use
  - Avoiding smoking and irritants
  - Managing reflux or allergies if relevant
  - Using healthy voice techniques learned in therapy
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## Follow-Up

You will typically have follow-up appointments with your **ENT consultant** and **speech and language therapist** to:

- Assess healing and vocal fold function
  - Monitor your progress in voice rehabilitation
  - Make any necessary adjustments to your care plan
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## Summary

Do:	Don't:
Follow all voice rest instructions	Speak, whisper, or hum too early
Stay hydrated	Smoke or drink alcohol while healing
Start SLT when advised	Return to full voice use without guidance
Use written communication during rest	Ignore pain or changes in your voice