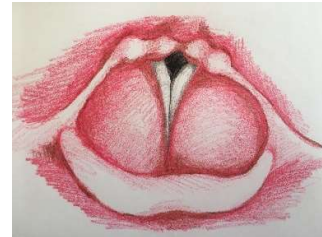


Paradoxical Vocal Fold Movement/ Vocal Cord Dysfunction

Paradoxical vocal fold movement (PVFM) or Vocal Fold Dysfunction (VCD) is a disorder of the larynx which causes the vocal folds to shut when they should open. This leaves only a small opening to breathe through, which can be extremely distressing. PVFM is sometimes confused with asthma because some of the symptoms are similar. Unlike Asthma, which is an immunological response, PVFM is a Vocal Cord Coordination problem where the vocal cords close when breathing in which, like Asthma, makes breathing difficult. PVFM cannot cause death but it can be serious enough to require hospitalisation.



Diagnosis

Diagnosis is usually by an ENT and/or Respiratory Physician, sometimes in conjunction with a Speech Pathologist. A series of tests and questionnaires are completed to determine how your vocal folds are working. This may include breathing tests, nasendoscopy (a camera to view the vocal cords) and discussion about episodes of breathing difficulties.

Causes

There are a number of suspected causes of Paradoxical Vocal Fold Movement including stress, and laryngeal irritation from reflux, dry air, smoke or perfume.

Treatment

Therapy with a Speech Pathologist can help you manage episodes by controlling your breathing and becoming familiar with what triggers an episode. You will be given strategies to practice to use in an episode of breathing difficulties. Underlying conditions which trigger PVFM (such as Reflux, Asthma and stress) should be treated by appropriate clinicians such as ENT, GP, Respiratory Physician and Psychologists.

