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Voice Care

Chronic laryngitis and vocal nodules are often related to ongoing excessive trauma to the vocal cords, usually after a more major trigger event such as a viral throat infection.

The following measures can help to reduce this trauma and allow healing to occur:

Avoid vocal over-use. Shouting, at work or in the home environment should be avoided. Consider the use of amplification devices if necessary. Singing may also increase the strain on your voice.

Avoid throat clearing and coughing. Instead, swallow or take a sip of water. If absolutely necessary, a single full cough is better.

Maintain good hydration to keep the larynx well lubricated and avoid sticky mucous collecting in the throat. Avoid caffeinated drinks, especially coffee, and excessive alcohol as these often cause dehydration.

Do not smoke and avoid smoky rooms where possible. Also avoid dry atmospheres such as air-conditioned rooms where possible.

Gastro-oesophageal reflux is a common cause of continuing inflammation as acid from the stomach comes up and irritates the throat. You may or may not notice symptoms such as heart-burn or an acid taste in the back of your mouth. A one month course of double dose antacid medication such as omeprazole is often the best way to determine whether this is an important component of your problem. This type of medication prevents production of acid in the stomach, so needs to be taken for a few days before it works, not just when the symptoms are noticeable. Other measures such as avoiding large meals before bed may also be helpful.

Asthma medications, particularly the cortisone based preventive inhalers may have an effect on the vocal cords after prolonged use. There may be alternatives available – discuss this with your doctor.

Speech therapy is often very beneficial in helping to maximize the efficiency of your vocal use and minimizing harmful effects.

Sometimes surgery is required if the diagnosis is not clear, a specific problem such as a cyst is found, or if all other measures have failed and inflammatory nodules persist.

