

HOARSENESS AND VOICE DISORDERS

Hoarseness is a general description for any change from a normal voice. It includes sounds that are raspy, breathy, weak, muffled, strained and spastic. Although viral and overuse laryngitis is most common, other causes include disorders of the larynx (voice box), lungs, airway, throat, neck and brain.

Patients seen in our office are first evaluated with an in-depth history and general ENT exam. Then the throat and larynx are painlessly visualized with a video endoscope or stroboscope to study the appearance and action of the voice producing structures.

Sometimes, further studies such as a CT or MRI scan of the head, neck or chest are required to identify the source of the voice disorder.

Other individuals are hoarse due to respiratory problems and may require pulmonary function testing or allergy testing to get a diagnosis.

If abnormalities are seen in the endoscopic studies, then speech therapy or outpatient surgery may be required to correct the problem.

If weakness or paralysis of the vocal cord motion is noted, adjusting the position of the vocal cord with an injectable material can provide rapid, painless improvement.

Regardless of the cause, our doctors and speech therapy team have extensive experience with dealing with all manner of voice disorders in the amateur and professional voice user and can help improve most cases of hoarseness.