



How long before I will be seen?

Waiting times for therapy vary throughout the year, depending on the number of referrals we receive. If you would like to know when your estimated appointment will be, please phone the Speech and Language Therapy Department on (01) 414 2776.

Can I get any more information?

The Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT) have produced a factsheet with more information on voice disorders. You can access this at:

<http://info.iaslt.ie>

Notes:

Name: _____

SLT: _____

Ph: _____

Produced by TUH SLT Department

Disclaimer: The information contained in this leaflet is designed as a resource for patients with voice disorders and is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or the advice of a Speech and Language Therapist.



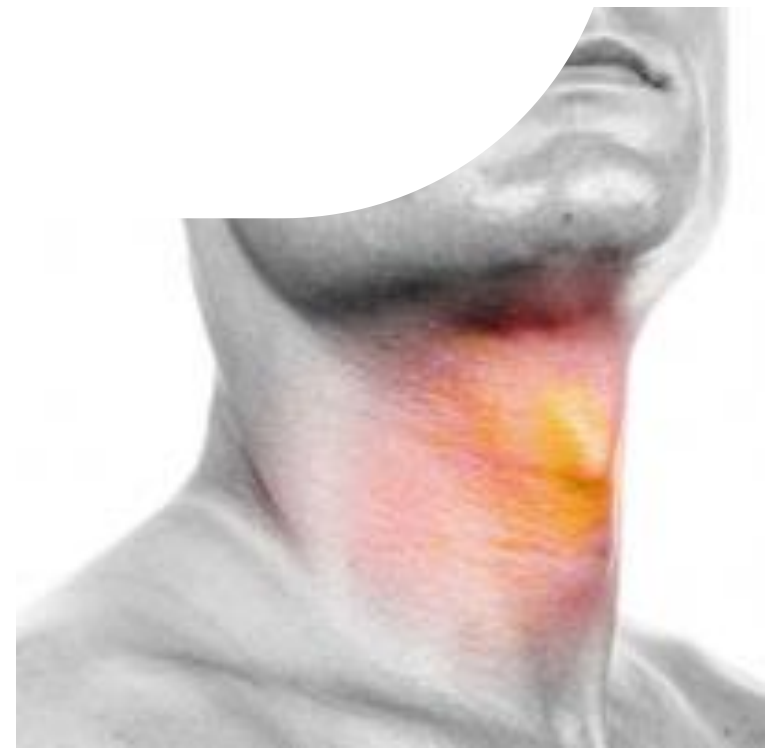
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PATIENT
INFORMATION
LEAFLET

Voice Disorders



What is a voice disorder?



A voice disorder is a change in normal voice quality for a prolonged period of time. The technical name for this is dysphonia (*dis-foh-nee-a*).

People with voice disorders usually describe their voices as:

- Hoarse
- Breathy
- Weak
- Strained
- Sore

What causes a voice disorder?

A voice disorder is almost always caused by problems within the voicebox. Your ENT (ear-nose-throat) doctor needs to look at your voicebox with a scope to see exactly what the problem is and to try and figure out how you developed a voice disorder in the first place.



In some cases, a voice disorder is caused by a physical change in the voicebox, such as “nodules”, which are like hard blisters on the voicebox. In other cases, a voice disorder is caused by overuse of the voice. Some people have a combination of both.

What can be done about it?

If your doctor feels it is appropriate, (s)he will refer you to see a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT). An SLT is a healthcare professional that specialises in communication and swallowing disorders, which includes voice disorders.

In some cases, your doctor may recommend tablets to control acid reflux, if it looks like you have symptoms of this. It is important to follow this advice.

What happens in Speech and Language Therapy?

In your first session with your therapist, you will be interviewed about the history of your voice disorder. This includes information on when it started and how it has progressed over time.

You will also have your voice measured by your SLT in terms of its strength and quality. This is done with a computer, rather than another scope.



After this, you will have therapy to help your voice improve. You will be given advice on how to keep your voice healthy, eliminate anything that may be making your voice worse and be given exercises to strengthen it.

Therapy is usually 4 to 6 sessions of 1 hour per week, but this varies depending on the type and severity of your voice disorder.

Is there anything I can do in the meantime to help my voice?

Things you can do to help your voice include:

- Not pushing your voice when it feels strained.
- Drinking lots of water and breathing in steam to keep your voicebox hydrated
- Giving up smoking if you are a smoker.
- Incorporate rest periods for your voice during the day, if you use your voice a lot.
- Cut down on acidic and spicy foods and drinks if you have reflux.
- Avoiding dusty, hot and dry atmospheres.

