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Post-Operative Instructions for Thyroplasty and Injection Laryngoplasty

Thyroplasty, arytenoid adduction, and injection laryngoplasty are surgical procedures to move a paralyzed or weak vocal fold (cord) closer to the center of the larynx in order to improve the voice. Thyroplasty is accomplished by placing either a goretex or plastic implant between the cartilage of the larynx (the “Adam’s Apple”) and the vocal fold. Injection laryngoplasty is accomplished by injecting a substance into the vocal fold.

Instructions:

Activity:

- Practice **ABSOLUTE** voice rest for 48 hours after surgery.
- Practice relative voice rest for 2 weeks after surgery: Employ "arm's length rule" wherein the patient does not address a person unless they are within an arm's length away. This helps reduce swelling of the vocal folds and avoids “slippage” of the implant.
- Your physician will discuss with you if more strict or longer voice rest is necessary.
- Avoid coughing, heavy lifting, or straining for two weeks after surgery.

Diet:

- Eat lightly at first.
- Eat slowly and avoid choking or coughing.
- Stay well-hydrated.

Medication:

- Go back to your prior medication unless otherwise told by your physician
- Be diligent with your reflux medications.
- Tylenol® may be taken as needed for pain.
- You may have been given a prescription by your physician, take as directed.
- Robitussin DM or Mucinex DM may be taken to help suppress a cough.
- Do not drink alcohol; take tranquilizers, sleeping medication, or any non-prescription medication unless approved by your surgeon.

What To Expect:

- You may have a dressing wrapped around your neck. You may remove this the morning after surgery unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon. When you remove this you will pull out a small rubber-band drain that is attached to the dressing.
- If you had an injection laryngoplasty, you may have a mild sore throat, mouth, or tongue. You may also have temporomandibular joint, and/or ear pain.
- Usually, swelling in the vocal folds will begin 24-48 hours after surgery and the voice will become hoarse over the course of the first few days after surgery. This is normal. It will take approximately 2 weeks for the swelling to go down and the voice to return to normal. During this period of time, you may talk with comfort only. If it feels strained, painful, or effortful to talk, it is best to rest your voice. The more you rest your voice during the first two weeks, the faster the swelling will go down and the voice will return to normal. It may take up to 6 weeks for all swelling to dissipate.

- **OTOLOGY**
- **ADULT & PEDIATRIC OTOLARYNGOLOGY**
- **VOICE DISORDERS**
- **HEAD & NECK SURGERY**
- **SNORING & OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA SURGERY**
- **SWALLOWING DISORDERS**
- **ALLERGY**

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Contact Your Physician if You Have Any of the Following:

- Difficulty breathing.
- Uncontrollable cough.
- A fever of 101 degrees (by mouth) or higher.
- Heart rate > 100 beats per minute
- Chest discomfort
- Severe trouble swallowing

Post-Operative Care:

- You should keep your incision dry except for cleaning it gently with ½ strength hydrogen peroxide and applying bacitracin ointment twice a day.
- You should see Dr. Rothholtz one week after surgery unless instructed differently.
- **If you have an urgent problem and are unable to reach your physician surgeon through the office phone system, please go to the emergency room.**

Precautions:

- You should not drink alcoholic beverages or operate power driven equipment/appliances while taking pain medication which contains codeine or derivatives of narcotics such as Tylenol with codeine or Vicodin as these medications may impair judgment.
- No straining in the bathroom. If you have problems with constipation, please have a family member call the office and speak to a nurse or medical assistant to have a laxative or stool softener prescribed. You may also try over-the-counter Dulcolax or Colace. If difficulties with constipation persist, please call the office.
- No vomiting or retching. If you have difficulty with nausea or vomiting, please have a family member call the office so that an anti-emetic can be prescribed.
- If you have any concerns not covered here or by your surgeon, please contact the office. After office hours the telephone answering machine will instruct you as to how to contact the physician on call

We do not refill painkillers over the phone. For prescription refills, please call during office hours.

Thank you.