

DIRECT LARYNGOSCOPY

RISKS OF NON-TREATMENT OF LARYNGOSCOPY SURGERY

Removal or biopsy of the abnormal tissue will make it possible to develop a reasonable plan of treatment. If a cancer of the larynx is present it will enlarge, destroy the voice box and spread to other parts of the body.

NON-SURGICAL TREATMENT OF LARYNGEAL DISEASE

If cancer is present, no treatment can be given until the diagnosis is proven. Non-malignant laryngeal disease may respond to voice rest, vocal therapy, or treatment for esophageal reflux.

DESCRIPTION OF LARYNGEAL SURGERY

The patient is asleep under general anesthesia. The examination of the larynx ("voice box") is done by passing a lighted metal tube through the mouth and looking at the vocal cords. Any abnormal tissue on the vocal cords can be removed or biopsied and sent to the pathologist for examination and diagnostic studies.

RISKS OF LARYNGEAL SURGERY

Surgical risk is low. There is a slight risk of chipping a tooth. There will be hoarseness for several weeks after surgery. In unusual circumstances the hoarseness may be permanent. In exceedingly rare instances, swelling could cause airway obstruction to the extent that a tracheostomy would have to be done. Even mild to moderate hoarseness following surgery may cause serious career problems for public speakers or singers.

RECOVERY TIME FROM SURGERY

Most people go home on the day of surgery. After 2-3 days, most people can return to work, but some may need more time to regain their strength. Postoperative pain is usually described as mild to moderate but some patients require narcotic pain medication to manage their pain. The voice will be hoarse for several weeks following surgery.

POST-TREATMENT CARE

Vocal rest is recommended for two weeks. When talking is required, speak in a soft voice and keep responses short. Drink cold fluids and breathe steam to moisten the vocal cords. Most patients find a soft diet is better tolerated for a few days after surgery, but there are no dietary restrictions and patients can eat whatever foods they prefer.