

Looking after your voice during chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy

An information guide



Looking after your voice during chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy

Symptoms during radiotherapy

Radiation involving the voice box will affect your vocal cords, which may cause changes to your voice quality. You may experience any of the following symptoms at some point during or after your treatment:

- Deeper voice.
- Hoarse voice.
- Weak voice.
- Strained voice.
- Breathily voice.
- Loss of voice.
- It may become more effortful to talk.
- Dry throat.
- Sticky secretions within your throat.
- Swollen neck.
- Soreness and pain when talking.
- Stiffness of your throat muscles.

Your voice is likely to worsen as your treatment progresses. This can be variable and may improve over time, however your voice may not completely return to how it used to be.

Taking care of your voice is very important

- Drink plenty of water. Some people find carrying a bottle of water with them wherever they go helps, unless advised not to by the Speech and Language Therapist.
- Do not smoke. Avoid smoky areas.
- Avoid whispering – although this may feel easier, whispering is harmful for your voice when used continuously.
- Do not force your voice when you talk – straining your voice can cause further damage.
- Do not shout – this puts further strain on your voice box.
- Reduce the number of caffeinated drinks you consume e.g. tea and coffee.
- Avoid alcohol – this will dehydrate you.
- Try to rest your voice as much as possible.
- Resist clearing your throat – this irritates your vocal cords making them more swollen. Instead try to take a sip of water, sniff or do a silent cough.

If these problems persist longer than expected you may wish to speak to the Speech and Language Therapist.

Your speech and language therapist is:-

If you need to, please contact the relevant speech and language department on:

Fairfield General Hospital – 0161 918 8570

North Manchester – 0161 720 2232

Royal Oldham Hospital – 0161 627 8971

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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