

ENT

Injection Laryngoplasty Under Local Anaesthetic

What is Injection Laryngoplasty?

Injection Laryngoplasty is a surgical procedure used to improve the quality of your voice. It is offered when one vocal fold (also known as a vocal cord) is not moving properly, which means your two vocal folds cannot close normally to produce a clear voice. The procedure aims to move the vocal fold/cord that does not work nearer to the one which does. This will close the gap between them when you speak and help make your voice stronger.

What are other options?

The alternative is an operation on the voice box involving a cut in the neck and inserting a prosthesis (an artificial body part). In many instances, the results of injection Laryngoplasty are comparable. You have been advised Injection Laryngoplasty because it is more suitable for you.

What are the advantages of carrying it out under local anaesthetic?

Carrying out this procedure whilst you are awake avoids the need for a general anaesthetic and admission to hospital. It allows the team to test your voice throughout and is generally well tolerated and effective. It is a new technique that has been introduced at University Hospital, Coventry and is currently available in only a few hospitals in the UK.

What are the materials used for injection?

The materials used are Hyaluronic acid (HA) (Restylane) and Calcium Hydroxylapatite (CaHA) (Radiesse Voice™). HA is used when a temporary



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effect is needed, i.e. for 4-6 months. CaHA is used for longer-term effect, i.e. beyond 24 months. These materials are very safe as they are both present naturally in our bodies. They have been used the world over for several years. There have been some reports of mild foreign body reactions, like localised inflammation in the voice-box, but these are extremely rare and have caused no significant effect.

Is any allergy testing needed?

No allergy testing is required.

What do I need to know before my appointment?

- Avoid smoking and drinking alcohol for at least 48 hours before your procedure.
- You will be advised not to use your voice for 48 hours after your procedure, so please plan for this, i.e. warn your friends and family that you will not be able to speak, take some time off work etc.
- If possible, please try to bring someone with you on the day for support.
- If you have had a head-cold, throat or lung infection within the last 2 weeks, please call the team on 02476 965684/02476 965709 to reschedule your appointment.

What should I do if I am on anticoagulants (blood thinners)?

If you take Aspirin, Warfarin, Clopidogrel, Rivaroxaban, Apixaban or Dabigatran these need to be stopped beforehand to reduce the risk of bleeding. Depending on the reason for the medications, you may need to have Clexane/Heparin injections instead. This will have been communicated to you by the Consultant (doctor) in the voice clinic beforehand. Please follow the advice given. If you have not stopped the medication as advised, the procedure will be cancelled and rescheduled.

What if I am a diabetic?

If you use insulin/tablets to control diabetes, please consult your GP to make any necessary adjustments to the dose, since you will not be able to eat/drink for a 3-hour period.

What do I do on the day of the appointment?

- **Please arrive 30 minutes before your given appointment time to clinic 10.** This is to allow time to prepare you for the procedure. If you are late, the procedure may not go ahead.

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- Please do not eat for 2 hours before the procedure. You are encouraged to eat until that point so that you do not come feeling hungry.
- Please take your regular medications (apart from anticoagulants (blood thinners) on the day. Medications due around the time of the procedure should be taken but with as little water as possible.
- Make sure you inform the clinic staff about any changes in your medical condition (e.g. changes in medical illnesses/medications), since you were last reviewed in clinic.

Injection procedure

Just before the injection, your voice will be evaluated and a special software programme will be used to record the findings. Once this is completed you will be asked to lie on a couch. A local anaesthetic will be sprayed into your nose, after which a fine flexible camera will be passed through your nose to look at your voice box. You will have experienced this in the voice clinic previously. Another local anaesthetic will then be injected into the front of your neck to numb the area of the procedure. A small portion of this anaesthetic will be injected into your voice box and you will be asked to cough so that your voice box and the upper part of your windpipe become numb. We may also spray the local anaesthetic via the flexible camera into your voice box.

The laryngoplasty materials will then be injected via a needle that passes through the front of the neck into the vocal fold that is not moving properly. Once this has been done, you will be asked to say “ee-ee-ee” to find out how your voice sounds. If necessary, a second injection will be given right away and your voice re-assessed.

The appointment will last around an hour, to allow for voice assessment and a review of your medical status. It takes about 3-5 minutes for the anaesthesia and 10-15 minutes for the injection itself.

Risks

This is a very safe procedure. Risks include bleeding, which may result in bruising of the neck and/or coughing up specks of blood. Other risks include infection, a stinging sensation in the neck/voice box, numbness of the throat and the sensation of choking, which may last up to 1 hour. Initially your voice may be slightly “rough” but this will settle.

Does it hurt?

Generally, no, although you may experience some pressure sensation and the urge to cough or clear your throat during the procedure. Once the anaesthesia has worn off there may be mild pain at the injection site and/or in the ear on the side of the injection for a few hours. This can be treated by taking pain-killers like Paracetamol. **Do not use Aspirin or anti-inflammatory medication for 72 hours afterwards to avoid the possibility of bleeding.**

After the injection

- You will be asked to wait in the reception area of the clinic for 20-30 minutes. After that you will be reviewed by the team to make sure you are well. You can then go home.
- **Please refrain from eating or drinking anything until around 1 hour** after your injection by which time the local anaesthetic will have worn off. Once you can feel yourself swallowing normally, eat and drink normally taking care to drink plenty of fluids, preferably water. It is also preferable to avoid caffeinated, alcoholic and very hot drinks for at least 48 hours.
- You can take your regular medications as usual. If applicable, please follow any specific advice regarding anticoagulants (blood thinners).
- If you normally drive yourself, you may do so provided you are feeling well. There are no restrictions on operating machinery if you are otherwise feeling well.
- Avoid vigorous exercise for at least 48 hours.
- **You will need absolute voice rest for 48 hours.** Avoid forceful coughing or clearing of the throat. Please do not answer the telephone; use alternative means of communication like text messages or by writing.
- After the first two days and for at least 5 days:
 - You may cautiously use your voice. Aim to speak at a normal conversational level;
 - Rest your voice if it feels tired;
 - Please do not shout/scream/whisper/force your voice/talk for longer than a few minutes at a stretch. Avoid forceful coughing or clearing of the throat.
- Please avoid smoking/smoke for at least 10 days afterwards. Aim to quit smoking if possible, as this will worsen your voice problem.

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Can I go back to work?

You should be able to get back to work after 5 days. However, take extra care in case your job involves using your voice. If this is the case, you may need to take longer off work; this will be discussed during your clinic appointment.

Will I have a follow-up?

Around 2 weeks after the procedure, you will be reviewed by the Speech and Language Therapist either through a clinic or telephone appointment. You will be reviewed in the voice clinic in about 6 weeks to assess your voice. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need advice, please contact Speech and Language Therapy on 024 7696 1010, or on the number of your allocated speech therapist.

Who do I contact 'out of hours'?

Please contact the ENT doctor on-call via the hospital switchboard, 024 7696 4000 and ask to speak to the ENT registrar.

Further Information

If you have any questions or comments about this information sheet, please contact the UHCW Speech and Language Therapy team on: 024 7696 5709.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 6449 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

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