



## Post-operative voice use

### Medications

Your medical record may include a prescription for cough syrup. The syrup helps suppress the urge to cough and also reduces swelling. Take the syrup according to the doctor's instructions.

### Points to note:

- Speaking: You must **not speak for the first four days, nor cough or whisper**, unless the doctor has given you different instructions. If you whisper, you will unconsciously speak in a strained manner. It is recommended that you make soft sighing sounds for about 10 seconds every few hours.
- **Do not cough or clear your throat:** this is harmful to the injured vocal cords and hinders healing. When you cough or clear your throat, you are trying to get rid of mucus or a tickle in your throat. However, this sensation quickly returns. Try to suppress the cough by, for example, taking a sip of water or humming. This will help clear the mucus.
- **Inhaling moist steam** is very good for the vocal cords. Add 1 level tablespoon of non-iodized salt per 1 L of boiling tap water. There are two ways to inhale the steam:
  - Using an inhaler (available online or at a pharmacy);
  - Or heat a small pot of water on the stove, pour the contents into a bowl, and lean over the bowl to inhale the steam. Place a towel over your head so the steam can go directly to your face.Breathe in the steam through your mouth and nose. Repeat this 3–4 times a day.
- Keeping your voice well-hydrated is also very important, as dehydrated vocal cords are more vulnerable. You can do this by drinking at least **1.5 liters of water** every day.
- **Do not smoke:** avoid smoky and dusty areas for the first six weeks. Quit smoking completely. Smoking has a negative effect on the healing of the mucous membranes.
- Breathing: Many people breathe through their mouths while resting or sleeping. It is better to **breathe through your nose**. This prevents your throat from drying out, reducing the risk of inflammation and a scratchy throat. If you have trouble breathing through your nose, let your doctor or speech-language pathologist know.
- Starting on day five, you may **begin speaking again**. **Gradually** increase the amount you speak. On a scale of 1 to 7, where your normal speaking volume is 7, your speech activity in the first week should be 3 (less than half of what you normally say). In the second week, this is 4/7 (half of what you normally say), in the third week 5/7, in the fourth week 6/7, and in the fifth week 7/7 (normal amount). Spread out your short speaking sessions throughout the day, and don't save everything for the evening or the weekend.





- Voice: Your voice may sound low, hoarse, or raspy at first. This is normal shortly after surgery. Do not try to force a high or loud voice. If your voice does not produce any sound, it is better to wait a moment before speaking. If necessary, use a pen and paper or your smartphone.
- If you start speaking after a few days, do so as naturally as possible, using a relaxed voice. Try **not to force your voice** if you notice that speaking isn't going well. Try not to shout during the first six weeks. Avoid long phone calls during the first few weeks.
- **Singers:** Starting on day five, singers may perform vocalization exercises for 5 minutes, twice a day. The duration of the vocalization exercises may be increased by 5 minutes per session each week.

Take a look at [www.stemkliniekazdelta.com/en/nuttige-tips](http://www.stemkliniekazdelta.com/en/nuttige-tips) : Post-operative voice recommendations.