

After Voice Surgery

Voice rest:

1. Not everyone is on vocal rest after voice surgery

If you had a **“filler” of a “plumping” injection** to add to the vocal folds you do not need to be on voice rest and the information below about voice rest does not apply to you. If we used Prolarynx voice gel, Prolarynx, Durasphere or any substance with the goal of bringing the vocal folds together better and strengthening your voice, we actually want you talk afterwards, just don’t overdo it.

We often give you some time to adjust to the injection before having you come back to start voice therapy (2-3 weeks).

2. If you have **something removed** from the vocal folds (cords)—like a ***cyst, or polyp, or papillomas***, then you likely need to rest your voice.
 - a. Voice rest means: no talking, no whispering, no humming, and no singing, basically: no sound is supposed to come from you. (coughing and sneezing are reflexes so we understand this may happen, but neither should be repetitive or excessive). We also discourage loud laughing because the larynx is involved in this too. The vocal folds are very delicate so we try not to put stitches in them. However, your tissues heal better when the edges of healing are close together. So, talking and using the vocal folds tends to pull the edges apart. You can think of talking like *pulling out your stitches* and remind yourself why this is a bad idea.
 - b. Voice rest usually lasts between 48 hours and 7 days depends on the extent of what was removed
 - c. For singers, it is likely that your period of voice rest will be on the longer end (7 days). Afterwards, you will also see the speech pathologist and begin some exercises. We try to work with your voice coach (if you have one) to gradually return to singing as well. Because we realize that performing is different and can be more stressful, we prefer that you return to performances and auditions until we have cleared you to do so. *This may be several weeks so please consider this when scheduling a procedure.* We want you to be fully healed and ready to present your best voice before you perform again.
3. When voice rest ends:
Starting to talk again after being on voice rest is sort of like going to gym after being absent for a while. Your muscles may feel a little sore and your rhythm may feel a little off at first. You might be slightly hoarse at first too. Try not to panic. This is not

uncommon and often things improve as you talk and work with our Speech Language Pathologist with restorative exercises. Just take it slowly.

Eating:

We recommend staying bland for the first meal, but typically, we work on the vocal folds which are in front of the swallowing tube. It is not uncommon to have a little discomfort, but most people eat fine. If pain/discomfort are an issue, ibuprofen/Motrin/Advil or Tylenol/acetaminophen are often enough to make you feel better.

Drinking (fluids):

Stay hydrated. Take your weight in pounds and then use that number, divide by two and use ounces. So, a person who weighs 150lb, should try to drink 75 ounces of water per day.

- a. Drinking (alcohol): This may interact with pain medications AND it usually stimulates your kidney to release water so you can get dehydrated. Probably best to avoid for a few days. Afterwards, it is okay in moderation, but alcohol also tends to trigger acid reflux so be mindful.

Traveling

We typically like to see patients back one week after surgery for an appointment with Dr. Sims—who will look at the vocal folds—and an appointment with Jan Potter Reed to start voice therapy right away. So, we would prefer that you not travel right after surgery. Also, airplanes are typically dry and not good for the voice, so it is better for healing to not fly anywhere after voice surgery.