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Greenville Ear, Nose & Throat

## Using Your Voice After Surgery

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### Week 1

- For the first 24 hours after surgery, eat only soft foods.
- Have someone call your doctor as soon as possible after surgery to schedule a follow-up appointment for you. Our phone number is (864) 454-4368.
- Complete the number of days of vocal rest prescribed by your doctor: \_\_\_\_\_. Vocal rest means NO TALKING OR SINGING.
- Do not whisper, cough or clear your throat. Swallow hard with your saliva or take a sip of water if you feel the urge to clear your throat or cough.

Start using your voice slowly and delicately following surgery:

- a. Use your voice for short periods followed by vocal rest.
- b. Gradually increase the time you use your voice. Rest your voice often.
- c. Follow the schedule below after the initial days of complete vocal rest. These guidelines are for voice use per hour, per day.

### Week 2

5-10 minutes of voice use an hour. 45-50 minutes of vocal rest. Do not talk for more than 1-2 minutes at a time.

### Week 3

15-20 minutes of voice use an hour. 30-35 minutes of vocal rest. Do not talk for more than 5-6 minutes at a time.

### Week 4

25-35 minutes of voice use an hour. 15 minutes of vocal rest. Do not talk for more than 10 minutes at a time.

### General Guidelines

The voice you use **MUST** be delicate, light and very breathy. Use an easy vocal effort, especially during Weeks 1 and 2. Use a soft to moderate loudness, but **DO NOT WHISPER**. Use this easy voice primarily during Week 1; gradually decrease its use during Week 2, and use your normal voice—but delicately—during Week 3.

Monitor your vocal abuses during these weeks. Avoid loud talking, excessive talking, yelling, throat clearing and coughing.

Drink at least 8-10 glasses of water each day. Eliminate alcohol and caffeine. Do not smoke or chew tobacco. Use this time to quit smoking permanently.

The medication you receive promotes optimum healing of the vocal cords. Follow all directions carefully. **DO NOT** stop taking the medication without contacting your doctor.

After surgery to the throat or voice box, it is not unusual to experience altered taste, tongue numbness, sore throat, jaw pain or mild difficulty in swallowing. These symptoms usually go away within a few days. If they last for more than 5 days, call your doctor.

Call your doctor immediately if you have shortness of breath, cough up blood or cannot swallow.