

Patient Guide

Voice



Voice

ENT

™

EAR, NOSE & THROAT
ASSOCIATES, P.C.

Your Voice

Your voice is a valuable communication tool. To help you maintain, improve, or restore your vocal capabilities, the team of professionals at ENT Voice can provide comprehensive diagnostic procedures and the latest in treatment techniques. In addition to helping adults and children achieve and maintain a healthy voice, we also provide rehabilitation for breathing difficulties caused by improper functioning of the vocal folds.

How is the Voice Produced?

Your larynx (LAR-ingks), commonly called your “voice box”, is located approximately at the mid-point of your neck. The thyroid cartilage, or “Adam’s apple” forms the front of the larynx and protects the vocal folds. There are two vocal folds in the larynx. The larynx is designed to protect the lower airway (trachea/windpipe and lungs) and functions to produce voice.

The vocal folds are made up of muscle and are covered by a flexible layer called mucosa. When you breathe the vocal folds remain open and there is generally no sound. By bringing the vocal folds together like a valve, air passes between them causing vibrations, which then produce your speaking and singing voice.

What Causes Voice Problems?

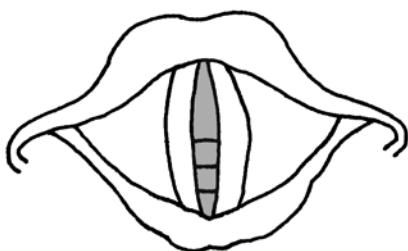
Voice problems can occur as a result of voice misuse or overuse, muscle tension, thyroid disorders, hormonal imbalance, damage caused by acid reflux, physical injury, stroke, Parkinson’s disease, and other neurological conditions.

A voice becomes a “problem voice” when the pitch, loudness, or quality calls attention to itself rather than to what the speaker is saying. It is also a problem when the speaker experiences pain or discomfort while speaking or singing. If you experience hoarseness, voice change, or discomfort that lasts for more than 10 days (in the absence of any allergy or cold), you should have an examination by a medical doctor.

Vocal Folds Open



Vocal Folds Closed



Related Conditions

Many voice and throat symptoms may be due to stomach acids abnormally spilling into the back of the throat. This condition is known as Laryngo pharyngeal Reflux or LPR. Symptoms of LPR may include hoarseness, throat clearing, coughing, sensation of something in the throat, burning, or belching. This diagnosis is made through the use of 24-hour pH probe testing. Treatment may include diet and lifestyle changes and/or acid reflux medications.

Breathing difficulties may occur due to improper closure of the vocal folds during inspiration, expiration, or both. This condition is known as Vocal Cord Dysfunction or VCD. This may occur during exertion or at rest. Symptoms may include shortness of breath, throat tightness, wheezing or squeaking while breathing in, or a choking sensation. This diagnosis is made by using a flexible endoscope (camera) through your nose to observe breathing patterns. Treatment is accomplished through Laryngeal Control Therapy with a Speech Pathologist.

Diagnosis

The initial visit

Our goal is to understand the conditions causing your voice problem. To accomplish this, we will first conduct a comprehensive ear, nose and throat exam, which includes examination of your vocal folds. Because many circumstances and medical conditions can effect vocal health and voice production, we will also discuss other related aspects of your health that may contribute to your voice problem.



Videostroboscopy

Depending on the findings of your initial exam and/or your response to medical treatment, you may be scheduled for videostroboscopy (video-stroh-boss-co-pee). This procedure uses state-of-the-art technology to provide a magnified view and slow motion video of your vocal folds. This allows us to see details of possible growths and any abnormalities of your vocal fold movement and overall function.

During the exam, a scope is placed above your vocal folds to get a close-up view; this procedure can be performed via your mouth or nose. As this exam is similar to the mirror exam performed at your first visit, it is typically a quick and well-tolerated procedure. Anesthetic spray may be used in your throat to make the exam more comfortable for you.

Every exam is digitally recorded and reviewed with you during your appointment. The findings of this exam will help guide you and your physician in choosing the best option for treatment and rehabilitation.

Treatment and Rehabilitation

Can Voice Problems be Treated?

Yes. Voice disorders are typically treated with voice therapy, medication, and/or surgery. Non-invasive treatment methods are pursued initially when appropriate.

What if I need Voice Therapy or Voice Instruction?

The Speech Pathologist and Singing Instructor are integral parts of rehabilitating voice problems. Specific to patients' needs and diagnosis, therapy sessions are designed to provide comprehensive patient education and vocal exercises to improve vocal quality and efficiency, strength and function of the voice, and to minimize damage to the voice. Patients are typically seen once a week for an average of 6-8 weeks. Individualized voice exercises are provided in order to maintain and continue progress.

What Does Vocal Fold Surgery Involve?

If needed, surgical options include microsurgical removal of growths on the vocal folds. Implants or injections of the vocal folds are used to strengthen the voice in cases of vocal fold bowing due to aging or vocal fold paralysis.

How is Botox Used for Voice Disorders?

Botulinum toxin or Botox, is a medication that temporarily weakens the muscles into which it is injected. It is used for cases of Spasmodic Dysphonia and vocal tremor. With these voice disorders, patients may have a "strained" or "strangled" voice quality resulting from involuntary spasms of the vocal folds. Symptoms may be controlled by the use of Botox.

A Team Approach

Because there are many reasons for voice disorders, the various professionals at ENT Voice work as a team with you and your primary care physician. We involve you in a process during which information is received and treatment is provided for your voice problem. You are also educated in ways to maintain prolonged vocal health. When you work with our physicians, speech pathologists, voice instructors, and other professionals, you are part of a coordinated effort. You will be learning to care for your voice to ensure its continued health.

Appointments

To schedule an appointment, please call (260) 426-8117, option 4. We may ask you several questions about your condition in order to schedule your appointment(s) as efficiently as possible. If for some reason you are unable to keep your appointment, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can use that time for another patient. Please contact our office if you have any questions or concerns regarding your care.

Our office will bill your insurance company for services provided to you by our facility; however, please remember that these charges are “yours” and you are responsible for all charges not paid by your insurance company. As a patient, it is your responsibility to know your benefit plan and notify our office of any stipulations or limitations set forth by your insurance company. If you are a member on an HMO, it is your responsibility to ensure that your primary care physician has contacted your insurance company regarding your appointment at our office.

All applicable insurance co-pays are to be paid at the time of service. Any questions regarding your account can be directed to our billing staff at 260-426-8117, ext. 352.

Ear Nose & Throat Associates, PC

Ear, Nose and Throat Associates, P.C., is a medical practice of board-certified physicians and surgeons specializing in otolaryngology medical care and surgery. Whether we are treating children or adults, our approach is one of care and concern for the patient. Our staff of licensed clinicians and experienced office professionals are committed to you and your health.

Our Physicians

William M. Culp, MD
John E. Westfall, MD
Thomas W. Dumas, MD
David W. Stein, MD
John H. Fallon, MD
Mohan K. Rao, MD
Cynthia L. Wellman, MD
Douglas A. Nuckols, MD
Thomas W. Herendeen, MD
Stephen J. Schreck, MD
Deepkaran K. Reddy, MD
Amy L. Lai, MD
Adam R. Kaiser, MD
Brian D. Herr, MD



Nurse Practitioners:

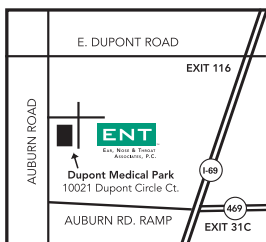
Valerie Stucky, RN, FNP, MSN
Julie Hall, RN, FNP, MSN

Our Office Locations

With a variety of office and clinic locations throughout the region, we are here to meet your needs.

Dupont Office

(CT Scanner location)
10021 Dupont Circle Ct.
Fort Wayne, IN 46825



Lutheran Medical Park

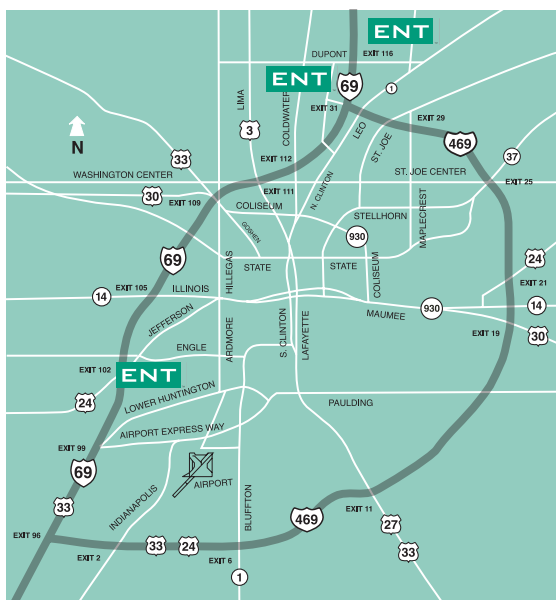
7926 W. Jefferson Blvd.
Fort Wayne, IN 46804

Parkview North Campus

11141 Parkview Plaza Dr.
Building 3, Suite 210
Fort Wayne, IN 46845

ENT Surgery Center

7900 W. Jefferson,
Bldg. 1, Suite 102
Fort Wayne, IN 46804



Practicing Excellence.
Setting the Standard.™

Dupont Office

10021 Dupont Circle Court • Fort Wayne, IN 46825

260-426-8117

www.entfortwayne.com