

Patient Information

Vocal Cord Check

ENT Department

Why do you need a vocal cord check?

The thyroid gland lies very close to the voice box (larynx) and the nerves to the voice box. A rare complication of thyroid surgery is injury to the recurrent laryngeal nerve which causes a vocal cord palsy (reduced movement of the voice box muscle). This can cause your voice to be hoarse and weak.

A vocal cord check enables doctors to see how your voice box is working before your surgery.

How do we check your vocal cords?

Firstly, your nostrils will be sprayed with some local anaesthetic to make the procedure more comfortable for you. Unfortunately the local anaesthetic does not taste very nice and you can refuse to have it.

This procedure is not painful just uncomfortable. The examination works best when you are relaxed and continue to breathe normally throughout.

A thin flexible camera (nasendoscope) is gently passed through one nostril and over the back of the nose into your throat.

Once the camera is in place, you will be asked to say "ee" several times and/or speak to how see your vocal cords are moving.

This procedure will take no longer than 5 minutes.

You will be advised not to drink or eat anything for about 30 minutes after the procedure to allow the local anaesthetic effect to wear off.

Are there any alternatives?

Unfortunately there is no other way of assessing your vocal cords.

We want to involve you in all the decisions about your care and treatment. If you have any questions at any time, please do let us know.

Are there risks?

With nasendoscopy, you may experience:

- Nose bleed
- Coughing
- Spasm of the vocal cord
- Feeling of light headedness
- Allergy to the local anaesthetic

These risks occur in less than one in every 100 people.

Contact Us

If you have any concerns about this procedure kindly contact us on:

ENT Treatment Room
Ward D5W, Level 5
Royal Gwent Hospital
Newport
Phone: 01633 – 234018

This document is intended to provide general information only and is not intended to provide personal advice or as a substitute for advice covering a specific situation. Readers should seek appropriate advice before taking or refraining from taking any action in response to information contained in this document.

**“This document is available in Welsh /
Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**