

# ENT & ALLERGY SPECIALISTS OF WESTERN PA

OTOLARYNGOLOGY • HEAD & NECK SURGERY • SINUS DISEASE • SLEEP APNEA • AUDIOLOGY  
HEARING AIDS • BALANCE DISORDERS • ALLERGY • PEDIATRIC ENT • SWALLOWING DISORDERS

## Dr. Staltari's Postoperative Vocal Fold Surgery Instructions

### WHAT TO DO

- You may return to work or school as you are comfortable. Most patients take 1-2 days to recover.
- Restart all prior medications with the exception of aspirin.
- Maintain your hydration. Drink enough water that your urine is pale in color.
- Relax! Enjoy these few days of voice rest and pamper yourself.

### WHAT NOT TO DO

- Avoid heavy lifting (anything over 10 lbs. ) or strenuous exercise.
- Absolutely NO talking or whispering for 2 days after surgery. Use texting, e-mail, or pen & paper communication when necessary. This is to help maximize the benefits of the injection and minimize complications.
- No whistling.
- Do not take aspirin products or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. (Advil, Motrin, Aleve, Anaprox, Naprosyn).
- Avoid catching a cold! Wash your hands frequently, get plenty of rest and avoid individuals who are sick.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

#### 1. When will I see the Doctor for a Post-Op visit?

Your postoperative visit should be scheduled at the time of surgery scheduling. If it hasn't been or you do not remember your visit date, time, and office location, please call any of our office locations for assistance or to schedule a visit 1-2 weeks after surgery or as otherwise directed.

#### 2. When can I return to school or work?

Each patient and each surgery is unique for the individual's tolerance and recovery. Many patients feel comfortable to resume light duty work or school 1-2 days after surgery. If you require more time for recuperation, you may contact the office for a work/ school excuse. Do not perform heavy duty or strenuous physical work until cleared by Dr. Staltari.

#### 3. Will I have postoperative pain?

Some mild discomfort, sore throat, tongue numbness, mouth or neck pain, and metallic taste are all expected to some degree and are normal following throat surgery. Pain can be treated with Tylenol (acetaminophen).

#### **4. What if there is bleeding?**

Coughing up flecks of blood or spit is not uncommon after surgery. Profuse bleeding or continued oozing from the throat is not normal and warrants a phone call to the office for directions or treatment by an Emergency Department physician.

#### **5. Should I expect to have a temperature?**

Generally, the body temperature does not rise above 100° following surgery, and this rise is due to the fact that the patient becomes mildly dehydrated because he/she does not drink enough fluids. Any persistent temperature above 101° should be reported to our office.

#### **6. What if I develop a cough?**

Throat clearing and coughing should be avoided following vocal fold surgery. If you cannot get rid of the urge to clear/cough by swallowing liquid, you may use a “silent cough” technique. Breathe air in and blow it out quickly through your throat without making a voice sound. After you have exhaled, tuck your chin down and use a strong, hard swallow. This technique should clear anything in your throat. If you are unable to stop coughing, you should use over the counter cough suppressants: Delsym, or Robitussin Cough are recommended. If your cough persists, it is imperative that you call your surgeon as soon as possible for a prescription cough medication.

#### **7. When can I resume my regular medications?**

Unless otherwise directed, all medications ordered by a physician before surgery may be resumed after surgery. If you take daily baby aspirin, please do not take until day 2 following surgery.

#### **8. May I eat and drink according to my regular diet?**

Please avoid spicy, acidic foods after surgery. Significant acid reflux may hamper the healing process. If you are taking or have been prescribed anti-reflux medications, please continue to take these as directed. Otherwise, you may resume your regular diet. Take special care to stay hydrated and consume healthy calories to assist your recovery. Stay away from excess caffeine and alcohol as these are dehydrating.

#### **9. How will my voice sound and feel after surgery?**

The voice takes time to return and recover after voice surgery. Allow for several weeks after you begin talking for the initial strained quality to dissipate. Your voice may also feel “tight” and effortful. It is important that you don’t push your voice beyond what is comfortable. Listen to your body, and take frequent “voice rest” breaks. You can anticipate several weeks before voice quality is improved.

We recommend voice-reinstatement under the direction of a specially trained Speech-Language Pathologist who will walk you through the best use of your voice to optimize recovery.