**Advice for patients before vocal cord surgery ‘Microlaryngoscopy’**

**Introduction:**

This leaflet explains how to look after your voice before and after undergoing microlaryngoscopy. This is a surgical examination of your larynx (voice box) under general anaesthetic. The aim is to find out, in more details, what is wrong with your larynx, and if possible try to improve your voice. A sample of cells may be collected from your larynx for biopsy and further testing.

You are likely to be asleep for about 45 minutes during the procedure. The anaesthetist will talk to you about the anaesthetic on the day prior to your operation.

**Risks of vocal cord surgery:**

Your consultant will discuss the specific risks to you prior to the operation. In general, be aware of the following risks:

* Small risk of damage to teeth, because of the instruments used to help you breathe during the operation. (? New method of O2 delivery during surgery)
* Your voice may be no better or possibly temporarily worse after surgery.
* After waking you may have a sore throat, this will only last a day or two. Advice on suitable pain relief will be given to assist with this.

**Before coming into hospital for your surgery:**

In the week before surgery avoid things which irritate the vocal cords e.g. smoke, alcohol, caffeine.

If you have been prescribed reflux medication continue to take it as prescribed.

Throat clearing, coughing and shouting should be avoided. You must rest your voice after your operation and so warn friends and family that you will not be able to speak at all for 72 hours.

Arrange to take one week off work, although you may need up to two weeks off work if your job is vocally demanding e.g. teacher.

Have a pad and pen available to write things down. Bring it with you to the hospital.

Aim to drink around 2 litres of water per day.

Inhale plain steam vapours for five minutes at least once, preferably twice a day in the week before surgery.

**Immediately after your microlaryngoscopy for the first 72 hours (3 days)**

Complete voice rest – i.e. do not talk, whisper, laugh out loud, sing, cough or clear your throat as this may delay recovery. Use text and email to communicate instead of voice calls and video calling.

Aim to drink 2 litres of water per day, avoid caffeinated or alcoholic drinks, because they can dry out your vocal cords.

During the first 72 hours inhale steam vapours for 10 minutes up to four or five times a day.

Avoid smoking. Avoid smoky and polluted atmospheres.

Avoid heavy lifting, pushing and pulling including gym and aerobic activity.

**For the next week or two:**

After the first 72 hours of complete voice rest, unless advised otherwise, it is important to start using your voice again with care. Gradually and gently build up the amount of talking you do over the following week. This help your vocal cords to begin working properly and encourages further healing.

For at least two weeks after surgery it is important that you:

Speak quietly and gently for short periods

Speak less often than usual, gradually increasing the amount you use your voice each day.

Avoid shouting, clearing your throat, coughing, laughing loudly, whispering and singing.

Rest your voice between conversations.

Aim to drink two litres of water per day and avoid caffeine and alcohol

Continue inhaling plain steam vapour for five minutes at least once, preferably twice a day.

Your vocal cords may take six to eight weeks to fully heal after microlaryngoscopy, so over this time, you should treat your voice with care. It is likely you will be offered specialist voice therapy as part of your treatment after this procedure.