



## **Infectious Laryngitis**

### **Causes**

Laryngitis occurs when the larynx (the voice-box) or the vocal folds become inflamed. When the inflammation is caused by an infection it is called "infectious laryngitis". Infectious laryngitis may be caused by bacteria. Viral laryngitis may be due to typical "common cold" viruses. Fungal laryngitis is caused by fungi such as candida. People who recently used broad-spectrum antibiotics or inhaled corticosteroids, are more prone to develop fungal laryngitis.

### **Symptoms, Signs and Diagnosis**

The most common symptoms are hoarseness or loss of voice, along with other voice related symptoms such as, vocal fatigue, voice related throat pain or irritation and sometimes cough. In more extensive cases one may experience difficulty or pain during swallowing or shortness of breath. Diagnosis is based on both symptoms and physical exam findings. Examination of the larynx using laryngoscopy and stroboscopy is essential for making the diagnosis. The hallmark findings of laryngitis include edema (swollen tissue) and redness. In viral laryngitis the vocal folds are swollen with compromised vocal fold vibration. The characteristic finding in fungal laryngitis is whitish speckling of the vocal folds or adjacent tissue. In specific cases a culture will be used to confirm the diagnosis or to identify the specific infecting agent.

### **Treatment**

The appropriate treatment is dictated by the severity of the laryngitis, and the type of the infecting agent. In cases of viral laryngitis, treatment is mainly supportive. Rehydration, humidification and vocal rest are commonly recommended. Anti-reflux therapy may also be suggested. Pain control and anti-inflammatory medications may be used to decrease discomfort. In severe or extensive cases treatment may also include the use of steroids. In fungal laryngitis treatment may include reduction/elimination of the predisposing factor (e.g., inhaled corticosteroids) and antifungal medication. In bacterial laryngitis treatment includes antibiotics.