

Laryngitis



Laryngitis is when your larynx (voice box) is irritated or swollen.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Hoarse, husky, and weak voice or loss of voice
- Cough
- Sore throat, fever, and/or trouble swallowing
- Swollen lymph nodes or glands in the neck

CAUSES

Common causes are allergies and irritants like smoke; bacterial or viral infections; and strained vocal cords. Smoking, drinking alcohol, breathing cold air, and using already distressed vocal cords can make the problem worse. Growths on the vocal cords or nerve damage to the vocal cords can also cause hoarseness.

TREATMENT

Self-care treats most cases of laryngitis. If needed, your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic for a bacterial infection.

TRIAGE QUESTIONS



Do you have a high fever or are you coughing up yellow, green, or bloody-colored mucus?

NO
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YES ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



Do you have hard, swollen lymph glands in your neck or do you feel like you have a “lump” in your throat that doesn’t go away?

NO
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YES ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



Has hoarseness lasted more than a week in a child, more than a month in an adult, or does it become chronic in a smoker?

NO
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YES ➔ **CALL DOCTOR**



USE SELF-CARE

SELF-CARE / PREVENTION

- Don’t smoke. Avoid secondhand smoke.
- Don’t talk if you don’t need to. Rest your voice. Write notes or text instead.
- Use a cool-mist humidifier in your bedroom.
- Drink a lot of fluids. Drink warm drinks, such as weak tea, with honey and/or lemon juice.
- Gargle every few hours with warm salt water (1/4 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water).
- Run hot water in the shower to make steam. Sit in the bathroom and breathe the moist air.
- Suck on cough drops, throat lozenges, or hard candy. (Don’t give to children under age 5.) Take an over-the-counter medicine for pain as directed on the label.

