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After vocal cord surgery

Home instructions — keep this sheet where you can find it

Rest your voice completely for 3 days

No talking and **no whispering**, because whispering strains the vocal cords as much as talking. Use notes, gestures, texts or a phone app.

Short, complete rest followed by careful, gradual use gives the best healing. Longer silence has not been shown to help more.

DO

- Drink plenty of water through the day
- Breathe steam or use a humidifier if your throat feels dry
- Swallow or sip water instead of clearing your throat
- Keep taking your usual reflux medication, and avoid foods that cause heartburn
- Eat and drink normally

DON'T

- Talk or whisper for the first 3 days
- Smoke, vape, or spend time in smoky places
- Drink alcohol during voice rest
- Cough hard, clear your throat, or strain to lift heavy things
- Shout or sing until Dr Vermaak says it is safe

Pain relief

A sore throat is normal for a few days, as is aching or tingling of the tongue, jaw or teeth from the instruments used to hold the mouth open. Take paracetamol and ibuprofen regularly for the first 2–3 days, unless you have been told not to take ibuprofen.

Getting your voice back

WHEN	WHAT TO DO
Days 1–3	Complete voice rest. Not even whispering.
Days 4–7	Begin using your voice in short, gentle conversations at a comfortable pitch and volume, building up gradually. Rest it whenever it feels tired. Avoid the phone and noisy places, where you will push your voice without noticing.
Weeks 2–6	Speech therapy as arranged, usually from about two weeks. Hoarseness is normal while swelling settles. Your voice should keep improving.
Return to work	Most people return after their voice rest. Teachers and other professional voice users usually need 1–2 weeks off, so plan a quieter return.

Phone the rooms on 021 975 0840/1 or go to the emergency unit if you have:

- Difficulty breathing, or noisy breathing
- Coughing up more than streaks of blood
- Difficulty swallowing fluids, or a temperature above 38.5 °C
- Your voice getting steadily worse after the first week, instead of better

Rooms 021 975 0840/1 — redirected to Dr Vermaak after hours.