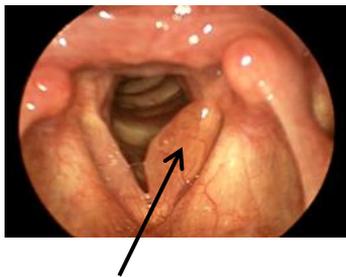


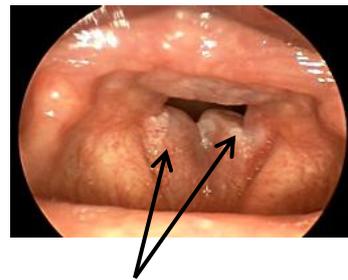


What is Reinke's Oedema?

Reinke's Oedema is a swelling along the full length of one or both of your vocal cords. The small space between the muscle in your vocal cord and the surrounding membrane fills with fluid and increases in size. In severe cases this can cause difficulties breathing.



Reinke's Oedema on one vocal cord.



Severe oedema on both vocal cords can make breathing difficult.

Images courtesy of Lucian Sulica, MD. www.voicemedicine.com

How does it affect your voice?

As the size of your vocal cords increase, your voice deepens, becomes lower and often extremely hoarse.

What causes Reinke's Oedema?

Reinke's Oedema can be caused by:

- smoking
- laryngitis (throat infection)
- too much shouting, muscle tension and not enough breath support
- heartburn and reflux.

What can be done to help?

Speech pathology can help identify what factors are causing your Reinke's Oedema and give advice to help reduce these factors and improve the voice quality.

In extreme cases, an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist may suggest surgery to remove the fluid and reduce swelling.



How to look after your voice

- Avoid shouting and whispering.
- Try not to sing loudly, strain or force your voice.
- Avoid talking for prolonged periods of time, particularly over background noise.
- Avoid clearing your throat and coughing harshly. If you have to clear your throat, do this gently and sip water.
- Avoid smoking and smoky environments.
- Avoid drinking spirits or wine as these will dry your throat.
- Avoid talking when your throat is dry or uncomfortable especially in hot, dry, dusty and smoky atmospheres.
- Reduce hot caffeinated drinks and spicy foods as these cause dehydration and strip mucus from your throat.
- Sip water regularly – good hydration is essential for good voice quality.

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