

Laryngitis: Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment Methods

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DESCRIPTION

Laryngitis is a common condition characterized by inflammation of the larynx, which is the voice box located in the throat. It is typically associated with voice loss or hoarseness and can be caused by various factors such as viral or bacterial infections, overuse or misuse of the voice, allergies, or irritants. This study, will explore the causes, symptoms, and treatment options for laryngitis, as well as discuss preventive measures and self-care practices for maintaining a healthy voice.

Causes of laryngitis

Infections: The most common cause of laryngitis is a viral infection, such as the common cold or flu. Bacterial infections can also lead to laryngitis, although they are less common.

Vocal strain: Overuse or misuse of the voice can strain the vocal cords, leading to inflammation and laryngitis. This can occur from excessive talking, shouting, singing, or speaking loudly for extended periods.

Acid reflux: Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), a condition where stomach acid flows back into the esophagus, can irritate the larynx and cause laryngitis.

Allergies: Allergic reactions to environmental factors such as pollen, dust, or pet dander can trigger inflammation in the larynx, resulting in laryngitis.

Irritants: Exposure to irritants like smoke, chemicals, or dry air can irritate the throat and lead to laryngitis.

Symptoms

The primary symptom of laryngitis is hoarseness or voice loss. Other common symptoms may include:

Weak or raspy voice: The voice may sound weak, rough, or strained, and individuals may experience difficulty projecting their voice or speaking at a normal volume.

Sore throat: The throat may feel dry, scratchy, or sore, making swallowing or talking uncomfortable.

Coughing: Laryngitis can sometimes cause a dry or persistent cough.

Throat discomfort: Individuals may experience a sensation of irritation, tickling, or a lump-like feeling in the throat.

Swelling or pain in the neck: In some cases, the lymph nodes in the neck may become swollen and tender.

Treatment and management

Resting the voice: Giving the voice a break by refraining from excessive talking, whispering, or yelling can help reduce strain on the vocal cords and promote healing.

Hydration: Staying well-hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids, particularly water, helps keep the vocal cords lubricated and prevents dryness and irritation.

Steam inhalation: Inhaling steam from a bowl of hot water or using a humidifier can help soothe the throat and reduce inflammation.

Avoiding irritants: Minimizing exposure to irritants such as smoke, dust, or chemicals can prevent further irritation of the larynx.

Over-the-counter medications: Non-prescription pain relievers like acetaminophen or throat lozenges may provide temporary relief from discomfort or pain associated with laryngitis. However, it is important to consult a healthcare professional before taking any medication, especially if there are underlying medical conditions or concerns.

Voice therapy: In cases of chronic laryngitis or recurrent vocal strain, voice therapy with a speech-language pathologist (SLP) may be recommended. Voice therapy aims to teach proper vocal techniques, breath control, and voice-protective behaviours to prevent future episodes of laryngitis.

Treating underlying conditions: If laryngitis is caused by an underlying condition such as acid reflux or allergies, addressing and managing that condition is essential for long-term management of laryngitis. This may involve lifestyle changes, medications, or other treatments prescribed by a healthcare professional.

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Antibiotics: If laryngitis is caused by a bacterial infection, antibiotics may be prescribed to combat the infection and reduce inflammation. However, it's important to note that antibiotics are not effective against viral infections, which are the most common cause of laryngitis.

Vocal rest and rehabilitation: In cases of severe or prolonged laryngitis, complete vocal rest may be recommended for a period of time to allow the vocal cords to heal. During this time, individuals should avoid speaking, whispering, or using their voice excessively. Once the acute phase has passed, gradual reintroduction of vocal activity and vocal exercises under the guidance of a speech-language pathologist can help rebuild vocal strength and flexibility.

Prevention and self-care

Maintain good hydration: Keeping the body hydrated by drinking plenty of water helps keep the vocal cords lubricated and reduces the risk of dryness and irritation.

Practice good vocal hygiene: Avoid shouting or screaming, speaking in noisy environments, and excessive throat clearing, as these can strain the vocal cords. Instead, use proper breathing techniques and speak at a comfortable volume.

Protect the voice in challenging environments: When in environments with loud background noise, use amplification devices or microphones to reduce the need to strain the voice to be heard.

Avoid smoking and second hand smoke: Smoking and exposure to second hand smoke can irritate the throat and vocal

cords, increasing the risk of laryngitis. Quitting smoking and minimizing exposure to smoke can improve vocal health.

Manage acid reflux and allergies: If acid reflux or allergies are contributing to recurrent laryngitis, work with a healthcare professional to develop a management plan to minimize symptoms and reduce throat irritation.

Warm-up and vocal exercises: Before engaging in activities that require extensive use of the voice, such as singing or public speaking, warm up the voice with gentle vocal exercises to promote vocal cord flexibility and reduce the risk of strain.

Use proper microphone technique: When using a microphone for public speaking or performing, learn proper microphone technique to ensure optimal vocal projection and reduce the strain on the voice.

Laryngitis is a common condition characterized by inflammation of the larynx, leading to voice loss or hoarseness. It can be caused by various factors, including infections, vocal strain, acid reflux, allergies, and irritants. Treatment and management of laryngitis involve voice rest, hydration, and steam inhalation, avoiding irritants, and addressing underlying conditions. Voice therapy and rehabilitation may be beneficial for individuals with chronic laryngitis or vocal strain. By practicing preventive measures and adopting good vocal hygiene, individuals can maintain a healthy voice and reduce the risk of laryngitis. If laryngitis persists or recurs frequently, it is important to seek medical advice for proper evaluation and management.