Thyroplasty type 1

What is a thyroplasty type 1 and why do I need this operation?
This is an operation on your voice box to make your voice stronger. The operation involves inserting an implant next to your vocal cord to push the vocal cord towards the midline to improve your voice. The implant is made of silicon.

This operation is performed from the outside of your neck. You will have a small horizontal scar over your neck.

What are the benefits of having a thyroplasty type 1?
When the weak/paralysed vocal cord is pushed towards the midline it is able to make contact with the good vocal cord when you are speaking. Some of the benefits you might have include:

- Feeling less breathless when speaking.
- A stronger voice.
- A clearer voice quality.
- Improved swallowing if you are experiencing swallowing difficulties.

Your voice will gradually improve and will reach its best quality approximately 1 year after the operation.

What are the risks, consequences and alternatives associated with having a thyroplasty type 1?
Most operations are straightforward; however as with any surgical procedure there is a small chance of side-effects or complications such as:

- Reactions to the implant can occur causing irritation and swelling. The implant may therefore have to be removed.
- Breathing problems may develop which could result in temporary tracheostomy (a hole is made into the wind pipe through the neck to relieve airway obstruction) while this settles down.

If you are concerned about any of these risks, or have any further queries, please speak to your consultant.

Alternatives
Your consultant has recommended this procedure as being the best option. The alternative to this procedure is Bioplastique injection however, the voice quality will not be as good and the procedure involves a general anaesthetic. If you would like more information about this, please speak to your consultant or the speech and language therapist.
There is also the option of not receiving any treatment at all. The consequence of not receiving any treatment is that your voice quality will remain the same. If you would like more information, please speak to your consultant or the speech and language therapist.

**Getting ready for the operation**

You will be asked to attend the pre-operative assessment clinic. A nurse will discuss the operation with you. You may need to undergo some routine tests before operation eg. heart trace (ECG), x-ray, blood test.

You will be asked some routine questions about your general health, whether you smoke or drink alcohol and the medicines you take at the moment. It would be helpful if you bring a list of your medicines with you as the nurse will need to know their strength; this includes any non-prescription medicines including complimentary/herbal medicines.

Please feel free to ask questions and raise any concerns you may have regarding your operation.

You will be offered an appointment with a speech therapist before your operation, if required.

You will benefit from steam inhalations for 3 minutes, 2 - 3 times per day for 2 weeks before your operation.

Avoid hot/spicy foods for the day before your operation.

You will be asked not to have anything to eat, chew or smoke for at least **6 hours** before your operation. You should have nothing to drink for **3 hours** before surgery. You will be advised of the actual times.

You will be asked to have a bath/shower before coming into hospital (if possible).

**Smoking cessation**

Smoking greatly increases the risk of complications during and after surgery, so the sooner you can stop the better. Even a few days before your operation can help to improve healing and recovery afterwards. For free help and advice contact the *NHS Derby City Stop Smoking Service* (Fresh Start) on Freephone 0800 7076870 or *Derbyshire County Stop Smoking Service* on Freephone 0800 085229.

**On admission**

When you arrive on the ward you will be introduced to the staff and shown to your bed. Your details (name, date of birth etc) will be checked on a number of occasions before the operation. This is normal practice and is for your safety. You will be given an operation gown and a wristband to wear.

If the area of surgery is particularly hairy, the nursing staff will clip it using specialised clippers (so as to not cut or damage the area before your operation). Please do not shave the area yourself.

You will have the opportunity to discuss your operation with staff. It is important that you understand your operation, and the risks involved before you sign a consent form to this effect.

You will be given the choice of walking to the anaesthetic room or alternatively you could be taken in a wheelchair if you wish.

A small needle or cannula will be inserted into the back of your hand.
What sort of anaesthetic will I have?
The majority of patients undergoing this procedure have this performed under a local anaesthetic (in which the area being operated on is numbed). The reason for this is so that the doctor may assess your voice quality and so that he is able to choose the correct size implant for you. You may be offered a sedative to help you relax.

However, for some patients who may be anxious about the procedure, it can be performed under general anaesthetic.

The anaesthetist will visit you before your operation and discuss the anaesthetic with you.

What should I expect after the operation?
When the operation is over, you will have your pulse, blood pressure, breathing and wounds checked regularly by a nurse.

If you have had a general anaesthetic it is usual to feel drowsy for several hours. You will be given oxygen through a facemask until you are more awake. Anaesthetics can sometimes make people feel sick. The nurse may offer you an injection if the sick feeling does not go away, this will help to settle it.

You will have a drip running into a vein in your arm/hand until you are eating and drinking again.

Dressings
Your wound will have clips to keep it together while it heals. These will be removed usually in 7 days.

You will have a dressing/large plaster covering your wound.

Wound drain
You will have a drain (a thin tube) coming from your wound. This drains any excess blood and fluid from your operation into a bag. This will be removed 1 - 2 days after your operation.

Pain relief
Your throat will be sore for a few days and your swallowing may feel different but this will soon get better. If you experience pain it is important to tell the nurses who can give you painkillers to help.

You will need to take 1 week’s course of antibiotics to prevent infection.

Voice rest
After the operation you need to completely rest your voice for 48 hours.

You will need to use your voice gently for 1 week after this voice rest.

Going home
You will be in hospital for 1 - 2 days.
DISCHARGE INFORMATION AND AT HOME ADVICE

Pain relief
It is usual to feel some pain after this operation. Take either the painkillers you were given from the hospital or a mild painkiller such as Paracetamol - follow the manufacturer's instructions and do not exceed the stated dose.

Stitches
Your clips will need removing in 7 days by the practice/district nurse. You will be given a card with instructions to take with you.

Time off work
It is recommended that you take 2 weeks leave from work.

Resuming normal voice use
You need to completely rest your voice for 48 hours after the operation; this involves no talking at all. Your speech therapist will be able to offer you advice.

Driving
Do not drive until you can wear a seat belt comfortably and feel able to perform an emergency stop. Your insurance company may refuse to meet a claim if they feel you have driven too soon.

It is also advisable to contact your insurance company with regards to cover following a general anaesthetic.

Further appointments
The speech and language therapist will call you 1 week after your operation to check your voice and how your recovery is going.

A voice therapy appointment will be made as necessary after your surgery to start voice exercises and help you achieve the best result from your operation.

Follow-up appointment
An appointment will be made for you for approximately 3 - 4 weeks and if you are not given a date before you leave the hospital will be posted to you.

If you have any queries, or require further information please contact the speech and language therapist on 01332 783182 or the voice specialist on 01332 787539, Monday to Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm.

After 5.00pm and at weekends contact Ward 307 on 01332 787307.

NHS Direct is a 24 hour nurse led, confidential service providing general health care advice and information.

Telephone 0845 4647 or visit the website at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

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