



MR TIM PRICE

EAR NOSE AND THROAT SURGEON

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Voice Problems

Voice problems are common. The causes of voice issues are very different in adults and in children.

In children, problems are very uncommon and are most commonly benign in nature. Depending on the age of the child, it can be quite difficult to examine the voice box and a General Anaesthetic may be needed to be able to make a diagnosis. Very young children without teeth can be examined through the mouth with a flexible telescope (**Nasendoscope**). Local anaesthetic is not required for this examination. Older children can also be examined with the **Nasendoscope** if they will co-operate with the examiner.

In adults the commonest presenting problem is hoarseness. There are a number of causes and in those with a smoking history, it is important to exclude a cancer. A full history will be taken and a general ENT examination performed. An examination of the voice box, using the flexible telescope (**Nasendoscopy**) through the nose is needed in all cases.

The nose will be sprayed with a local anaesthetic spray prior to introducing the Nasendoscope. Some people will be aware of a bitter taste in the throat from this but it goes away in about 5 minutes. The spray also makes the throat numb which may cause a feeling of something in the throat, as if you can't swallow. Rest assured that you can swallow. The sensation disappears in about 10 minutes.

Once a diagnosis is made, a management plan will be discussed with you, It may involve surgery or speech therapy and sometimes anti-reflux medication may be prescribed. Adequate water intake is very important in maintaining good vocal hygiene.