

Warren General Hospital

Procedure: Medialization laryngoplasty

Definition: Medialization laryngoscopy is a procedure that provides support to a vocal fold that lack either the bulk or the mobility it once had. Most commonly it is used to try and correct a neurologic injury or problem that prevents full functioning of the vocal cords. It is also called a thyroplasty since the procedure is performed through a hole in the thyroid cartilage (not the thyroid gland).

The vocal cord may require some support if it is paralyzed. This would prevent the vocal cord from moving close enough to the middle for the other vocal cord to come together and meet it. If they cannot come together, it is difficult to make a sound or at least a loud sound. The implant can rebulk or move the vocal cord so that they can come together for speaking.

Risks:

Anesthesia: The procedure is done under local anesthesia with sedation, which puts the patient at less risk than general anesthesia. There is still as with any anesthesia, a risk of reaction to the medication which can be life threatening. In the case of surgery there is always the added benefit of having life support equipment and trained personnel standing by.

Bleeding: Bleeding is a potential risk anytime a cut is made. Some medications may thin the blood and increase the risk of bleeding. Some examples of this would be: coumadin, aspirin or even some herbals and vitamins like Vitamin E.

Infection: Anytime an incision is made there is a risk of infection. Your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic to be given to you before or just prior to surgery. In this case an implant is being placed in the body, which could increase the potential for infection. This procedure will be done under the sterile conditions of the operating room.

Scarring: Depending on your body's ability to heal and your tendency to swell and scar you may experience scarring. Most results are excellent and in all likelihood the patient will be pleased with the result.

Breathing difficulties: Since the voice box and windpipe are of limited size, the moving of one vocal cord may diminish this size. There is also almost always some swelling post operatively. Steroids may be ordered to keep the swelling at a minimum this will depend on the extent of the surgery being performed.

THE SURGERY:

The patient will be awake but drowsy for the procedure. The doctor will have the patient talk during the placement so that he can get the implant in the correct location.

It will be cold in the operating room but the nurses will provide warm blankets. The patient will lay on their back and may be asked to extend their neck, a roll may be placed under their shoulders to do this as well. They will be given medication through their IV, When they are sufficiently “sleepy” the surgeon will inject the “numbing “ medication into the neck, He may spray some into your nose or throat.

The neck will be prepped with the betadine soln. (this will be cold). The area will be draped to keep it sterile.

About a one inch incision is placed in your neck over the voice box. It is placed parallel to a skin crease to decrease the visual scar. The surgeon then continues with placing the implant by having the patient continue to talk while taking measurements and placing the implant.

Recovery: Since there was no general anesthesia given the patient will be awake in the operating room. They will more than likely travel to the PACU for a short time. They will then return to ODS for the remainder of the recovery process. The normal discharge criteria should be met, walking, voiding, keeping liquids down with out nausea or vomiting.

The surgeon will give instruction on how soon after surgery the patient may drink, this will depend on the type and length of the local anesthetic

Pain: There is usually mild pain after surgery and they will have a pain med ordered. Sometimes there is a tickle or sensation of the need to cough, this can persist for a few weeks. Many find that Tylenol is sufficient for pain control. Discuss with the doctor if an OTC cough suppressant may be needed.