

## Patient information

# What is Reinke's Oedema?

Reinke's Oedema occurs where the surface of the vocal folds fill with fluid, becoming swollen and distended. Swelling is usually bilateral and symmetrical, but can occur on one vocal fold more than the other.

You may have seen an image of your swollen vocal folds during nasendoscopy. Below are images of typical, 'healthy' vocal folds, next to one on the right of those with Reinke's Oedema [The British Voice Association., 2007]:



Healthy vocal cords



Reinke's Oedema

Sometimes you will see Reinke's Oedema graded according to the severity and extent of the damage to the vocal folds:

Grade 1: The front third of the vocal folds is affected

Grade 2: Two Thirds of the front section of vocal folds is affected

Grade 3: The full length of the vocal folds is affected

## What causes Reinke's Oedema?

- Long term smoking is seen as the biggest contributing risk factor.

- Vocal abuse can also contribute - excessive and over-use of the voice, such as shouting or screaming.
- As the vocal folds are swollen, they can be more affected by reflux - see additional information sheet.

## **How can speech therapy help?**

During your ENT appointment, your consultant felt that you would benefit from being given new strategies to help your voice and to prevent further damage to your vocal folds in the future.

As part of this advice, we can discuss lifestyle changes and ways in which we can help you to adapt your voice to allow the vocal folds to heal and use them less harshly.

In more severe, recurrent cases, further surgery may be required to drain the excess fluid from the vocal fold swelling.

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)*

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>

