Hoarseness or Voice Loss
Abnormal huskiness in the voice that may range from a slight deepening of the speaking voice to an inability to make the normal sounds of speech.

START

Did the change in your voice begin within the last 3 days?

NO

Yes

Do you have a cold or have you recently had cold symptoms, a cough, or sore throat?

NO

Before the onset of hoarseness, had you used your voice more than usual or at an excessive volume?

YES

Overuse of the voice may have caused an inflammation of your vocal cords.

NO

Have you recently been drinking more alcohol than usual or smoking tobacco heavily, or do you habitually drink alcohol excessively or smoke tobacco?

NO

Have two or more of the following conditions accompanied your hoarseness: heightened sensitivity to cold temperatures, dryness of the skin or hair, unexplained weight gain, unexplained fatigue?

NO

Has the change in your voice or your loss of voice persisted for more than 2 weeks, or have you had several episodes of either condition during the last 6 months?

YES

Contact your doctor. You may have an underactive thyroid gland.

NO

Contact your doctor Immediately.

You need a prompt medical evaluation of your symptoms. A harmless condition may be causing your symptoms, but there is also the possibility of a polyp on the larynx or cancer of the larynx.

NO

If you are unable to reach a diagnosis from the information on this chart, and your hoarseness or loss of voice lasts longer than 1 week, consult with your doctor.

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