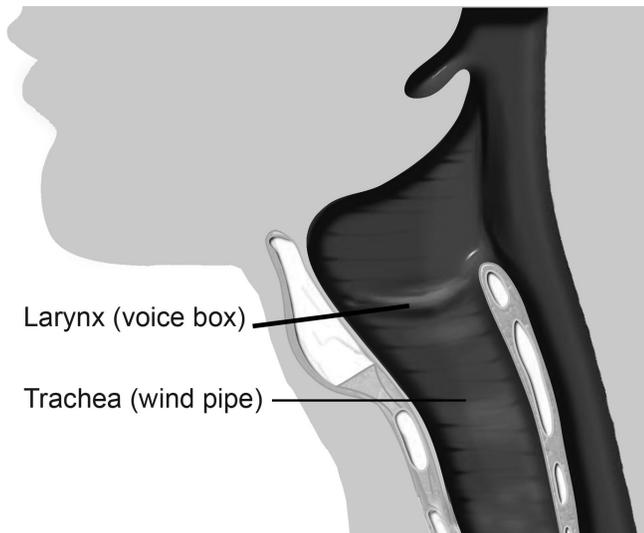


What Is the Larynx?

The larynx is your voice box. It sits at the top of the windpipe. It makes the bulge in the front of the neck called the Adam's apple.



Location of the larynx.

The larynx contains vocal cords that create sound when you speak or sing. It also helps hold the windpipe open so you can breathe. It protects the lungs with a reflex that makes you cough when food or liquid touch it.

What Is a Laryngectomy?

A laryngectomy is surgery to remove all or part of the larynx. It is often part of the treatment for cancer of the larynx (also called laryngeal cancer). Your surgeon may also remove lymph nodes in the neck. For more information about lymph node removal, please see the *Lymph Node Surgery* factsheet.

Taking out the larynx can cause problems with breathing. Your surgeon may need to make an opening in the front of your neck to your trachea so air can

move freely into your lungs. This opening is called a tracheostomy. It may be temporary or permanent, depending on the type of surgery you have. For more information, please see the *Tracheostomy* factsheet.

After Your Laryngectomy

A laryngectomy may change your ability to swallow. After surgery, you will get the nutrition and water you need through a feeding tube into your stomach or intestine. Your care team will tell you and your caregiver how to use the feeding tube if you still need it after you go home.

Depending on the type of surgery you have, you may not be able to speak as you did before. You may need to use a voice box machine or special valve to help you speak.

A person trained in speech and swallowing therapy will work with you before and after surgery.

Possible Side Effects and What You Can Do

Pain. After any surgery, some pain is normal. While you are in the hospital, your care team will do their best to help control your pain. They will ask you often about how much pain you are feeling. This helps your care team decide what pain medicines will work best for you. They may put pain medicine directly into your veins through an IV or give you pills.

When you go home, you will get a prescription for the same pain pills you took in the hospital. Follow the directions for your medicines. Tell your care team if your pain does not get better or if it gets worse.

Infection. Any time you have a break in your skin, there is a risk of infection. Good hand washing is the best and easiest way to prevent infection. Wash or

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If you have questions or concerns, please call:

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Head and Neck Nurse Line 801-587-4566

After hours, weekends, and holidays

Call the University Hospital operator at 801-581-2121.
Ask for the ear, nose, and throat doctor on call.

