

Patient information factsheet

Upper aerodigestive tract (UAT) injection under local anaesthetic

We have given you this factsheet because your doctor has referred you for an upper aerodigestive tract (UAT) injection under a local anaesthetic. It explains what a UAT injection is, what to expect during the procedure, and the risks and benefits. We hope it will answer any questions you may have. If you have any further questions, please speak to a member of the team using the contact details at the end of this factsheet.

What is a UAT injection?

A UAT injection is a surgical procedure used to improve the quality of your breathing, swallowing or voice. It involves having an injection in your throat to close a large gap between your vocal cords, moving them nearer together. The type of injection you will have will depend on the availability of the injections. The injection may be of:

- hyaluronic acid
- calcium hydroxylapatite
- botulinum neurotoxin
- a steroid

We will give you a local anaesthetic to numb the area before the UAT injection.

Why do I need a UAT injection?

You may need a UAT injection if one of your vocal cords has stopped moving properly. If your vocal cords do not move as they should, it means they cannot close normally, which can affect your ability to swallow properly (dysphagia) or produce a clear voice.

Benefits of a UAT injection

By moving your damaged vocal cord nearer to your working vocal cord, this procedure can:

- make your voice stronger
- improve the quality of your breathing
- reduce the risk of food or liquid going into your lungs accidentally

Alternative treatments to having a UAT injection

There are a couple of alternative treatments to having a UAT injection. These include:

- performing voice exercises
- having an operation on your voice box (this would involve having a prosthesis (an artificial body part) inserted)

If either of these alternative treatments are suitable for you, your doctor will explain them to you in more detail.

Before the procedure

48 hours before the procedure

You should avoid:

- smoking
- drinking alcohol

Blood thinning medications

You will need to stop taking any blood thinning medications before the procedure. This will reduce your risk of bleeding during the procedure. Blood thinning medications include:

- aspirin
- warfarin
- clopidogrel
- rivaroxaban
- apixaban
- dabigatran

Your doctor will tell you when to stop taking your medication before your procedure and when you can start taking it again.

On the day of the procedure

On the day of your UAT injection, please go to the oral and maxillofacial / ear, nose and throat clinic. This is located on C level, centre block.

When you arrive at the clinic, we will explain the procedure to you again and answer any questions you may have. We will then ask you to sign a consent form agreeing to have the procedure.

We will ask you to sit in a chair in our clinic room. We will then give you an injection of local anaesthetic to numb the area, so you will not feel any pain during the procedure. We may inject the local anaesthetic into the skin of your neck or into the back of your throat. We will also spray another local anaesthetic into your nostrils.

When all the areas are numb, we will pass a fine, flexible camera through your nostril, down into your throat so we can look at your vocal cords. We will then ask you to cough so that your vocal cords and the upper part of your windpipe (throat) become numb. Once numb, we will inject your vocal cord with the UAT injection. This may be through your mouth or through the skin at the front of your neck.

The procedure will take approximately 45 minutes.

After the procedure

We will ask you to wait in the reception area in our department for 30 minutes after your procedure. This is so we can make sure you are feeling well before you go home.

Eating and drinking

You should not eat or drink anything for one hour after the procedure. This will give the local anaesthetic enough time to wear off.

We may advise you to follow a soft food diet after your procedure.

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Medications

You can take your regular medications as normal after the procedure. If you take blood thinners, the doctor will tell you when you can re-start taking these.

Using your voice

You should not use your voice for 48 hours after your procedure. Please plan for this by telling your friends and family that you will not be able to speak for two days after the procedure and by taking time off work, if necessary.

Risks

As with any medical procedure, there are some potential risks. These include:

- bleeding
- infection (signs of an infection include a raised temperature and difficulty swallowing)

We will explain all the potential risks to you in more detail before the procedure.

Side effects

You may experience some temporary side effects after your procedure, including:

- pain in your neck or throat for 24 to 48 hours after the UAT injection (over the counter pain relief such as paracetamol should help with this)
- bruising
- coughing up specks of blood
- throat numbness (this usually wears off after about an hour)
- the sensation of choking (this usually wears off after about an hour)

If you are worried about these side effects, please contact the ENT outpatient department using the contact details at the end of this factsheet.

Follow-up appointment

You will have a follow-up appointment with your doctor approximately two weeks after this procedure. We will send you a letter in the post with details of this appointment. This appointment may be via telephone or in a face-to-face clinic.

Contact us

Ear, nose and throat (ENT) outpatient department

Telephone: **023 8120 3234** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm)

Ward F5 (out of hours)

Telephone: **023 8120 4644**

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