

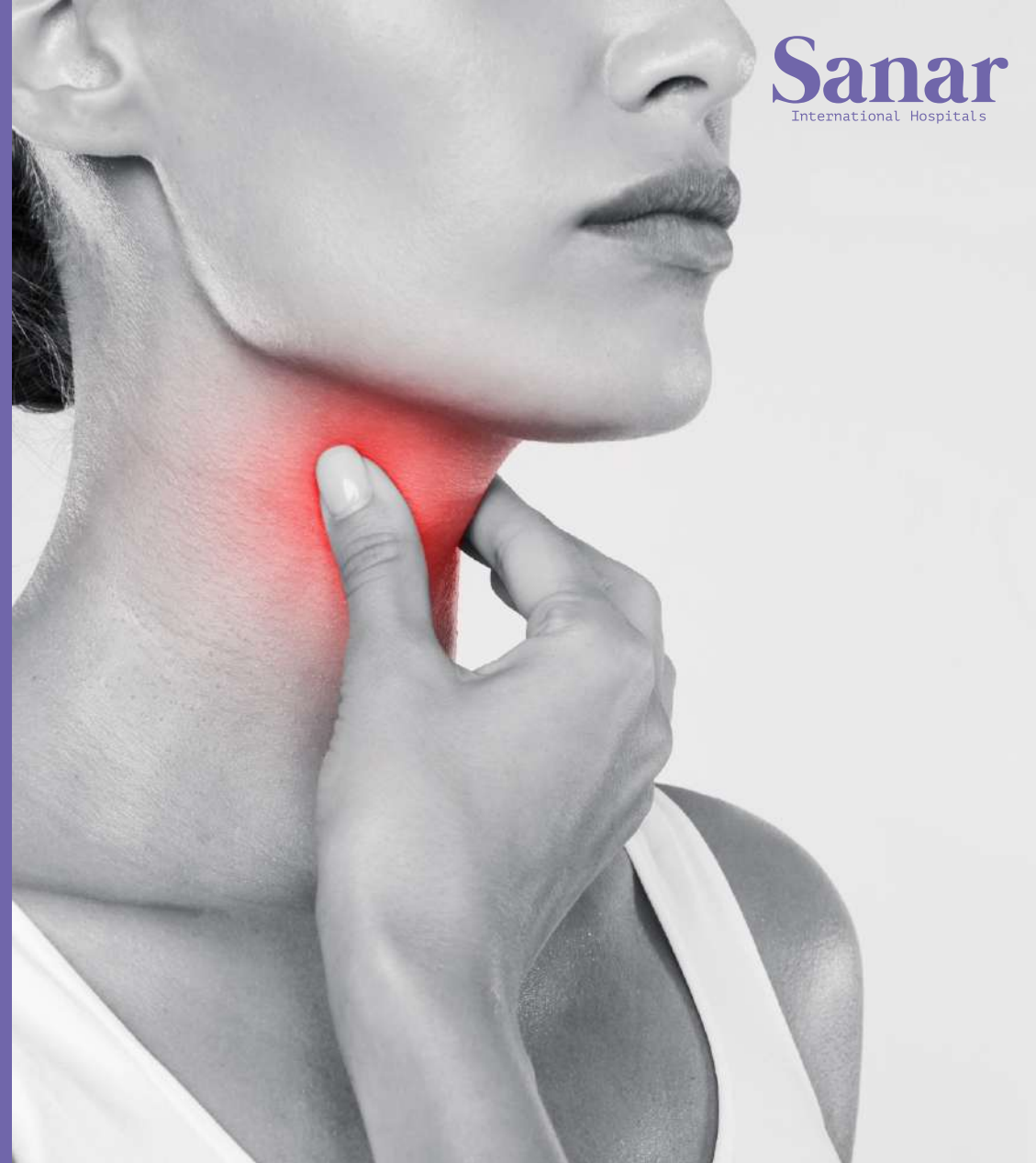
Sanar | International
Hospitals

+91-124-3528444

Golf Course Road, DLF Phase-5
Sector - 53, Haryana - 122002

www.sanarhospitals.com
info@sanarhospitals.com

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Understanding and Managing
Voice Disorders



What is Voice Disorder?

Voice disorder is a condition that affects the quality, pitch or volume of the voice, making it sound different or causing discomfort during speech. These disorders can arise from various factors and may be temporary or chronic.

Causes

- **Overuse or Misuse of the Voice:** Speaking loudly, shouting or using an improper vocal technique can strain the vocal cords
- **Medical Conditions:** Respiratory infections, neurological disorders and hormonal changes can contribute to voice disorders
- **Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD):** Stomach acid backing up into the throat can irritate the vocal cords
- **Smoking and Environmental Factors:** Smoking and exposure to pollutants or allergens can harm the vocal cords
- **Psychological Factors:** Stress, anxiety or emotional distress can manifest in voice-related issues

Symptoms of Voice Disorders

- **Hoarseness or Raspy Voice:** A persistent change in the voice quality
- **Voice Fatigue:** Tiredness or discomfort after speaking for a short period
- **Pitch Changes:** Higher or lower pitch than usual
- **Airiness:** Air escaping during speech, adding a breathy quality to the voice
- **Difficulty in Projection:** Inability to speak loudly or be heard clearly

Diagnosis

Diagnosis may involve a detailed medical history, a physical examination of the throat and imaging studies or if necessary, endoscopic procedures.



Management and Treatment Options

- **Speech Therapy:** Working with a speech-language pathologist can help improve vocal technique and reduce strain on the vocal cords
- **Rest and Hydration:** Adequate rest and hydration promotes vocal cord health
- **Medications:** If a medical condition is contributing to the voice disorder, medications may be prescribed
- **Surgery:** In severe cases, surgical interventions may be recommended to correct structural abnormalities

Preventive Measures

- **Hydration:** Drink plenty of water to keep the vocal cords lubricated
- **Avoid Vocal Strain:** Practice proper vocal techniques and avoid excessive shouting or speaking in noisy environments
- **Quit Smoking:** If one smokes, quitting can improve overall vocal health
- **Manage Stress:** Incorporate stress-reducing activities into the routine such as meditation and deep breathing exercises

When to Seek Medical Attention

Voice disorders can significantly impact the quality of life, but with timely diagnosis and appropriate management, many individuals can experience improvement.

If one experiences sudden and severe voice changes, difficulty in breathing or pain while speaking they should consult a healthcare professional for guidance customised to their specific needs.