

Hoarseness & Difficulty Swallowing go hand-in-hand

When the throat becomes too dry or an illness is affecting your body, your ability to swallow will be impacted. The act of swallowing can take great effort and may even become painful. While most swallowing problems are temporary and short-lived, some may be linked to a brain or nerve disorder.

The condition known as **dysphagia** is a swallowing disorder commonly associated with damage to nerves that affect swallowing. Swallowing problems may be caused by many different factors, such as:

- Allergies
- Colds
- Dehydration
- Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)
- Side effects of medications
- Taking bites that are too big and not chewing enough

Vocal problems may be caused by:

- Aspiration (inhaling something)
- Chronic cough
- Chronic hoarseness
- GERD
- Vocal cord cysts or polyps
- Dental irregularities

Hoarseness in the throat from acid reflux or GERD

GERD is the recurring movement of stomach acid from the stomach back up into the esophagus that can cause heartburn or chest pain. Acid reflux goes into the larynx when acid travels up the esophagus and spills into the larynx.

The esophagus can withstand a certain amount of acid exposure, but the throat and larynx are not meant to withstand any exposure to acid.

Acidic irritation to the larynx may result in a hoarse voice. As the vocal folds

begin to swell from acidic irritation, their normal vibration is disrupted. Even small amounts of exposure to acid may be related to significant laryngeal damage. If acid actually refluxes into the lungs, chronic cough and pulmonary conditions such as bronchitis or pneumonia can result.

Symptoms and diagnosis of voice or swallowing issues

Common symptoms of swallowing issues include having the feeling of a lump in the throat or having a hoarse voice. You might also feel a pain in the throat or chest.

Symptoms of acid reflux into the larynx may include:

- Laryngitis (loss of voice) or hoarseness
- Sensation of a lump in the throat
- Post-nasal drip
- Chronic throat clearing
- Excessive throat mucus



You may also experience sore throat, cough, spasm of the throat, and/or throat pain. Acid reflux can also have an impact on swallowing and speaking.

Additional tests you might need include:

- X-ray
- Barium swallow
- Biopsy
- Esophageal pH monitoring
- Motility testing

Treatment for swallowing and voice issues generally involves a combination of medication to reduce acid reflux as well as lifestyle changes.