Laryngoscopy

What Is A Laryngoscopy?

A laryngoscopy is a procedure used by ENT (ear, nose, and throat) specialists to examine your larynx, also known as the voice box, and the surrounding areas of your throat. It allows your consultant to get a clear and detailed view of structures such as your vocal cords, helping diagnose and manage conditions affecting your throat, voice, and airway.

When Might You Need A Laryngoscopy?

Your ENT specialist might recommend a laryngoscopy if you're experiencing symptoms like:
– Persistent hoarseness or changes in your voice lasting more than three weeks
– Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)
– Persistent cough or throat irritation
– Chronic throat pain or discomfort
– Breathing difficulties or unexplained shortness of breath
– A sensation of having something stuck in your throat

A laryngoscopy helps identify issues such as inflammation, vocal cord nodules, polyps, cysts, infections, or signs of throat cancers. Early diagnosis and treatment are crucial for managing these conditions effectively.

Types Of Laryngoscopy

There are two main types of laryngoscopy, each suited to different clinical scenarios:

Flexible laryngoscopy:
This is the most common method used. It involves a thin, flexible tube with a camera and light at the end (laryngoscope), gently passed through your nose and down into your throat. It's typically quick, painless, and performed under local anaesthetic. It allows real-time viewing of your vocal cords and surrounding throat structures while you breathe, speak, or swallow.

Rigid laryngoscopy:
Rigid laryngoscopy involves using a firm, straight tube inserted through your mouth into the throat under general anaesthetic (meaning you'll be asleep). This procedure is usually performed in a hospital operating theatre if your doctor needs to take a biopsy (tissue sample), remove growths such as polyps or nodules, or conduct detailed examinations of your vocal cords and throat structures.

What Happens During Flexible Laryngoscopy?

During your appointment at Birmingham Head and Neck Clinic, your consultant will first explain the procedure fully and answer any questions you might have. You'll usually be seated comfortably, and your nose and throat will be numbed with a gentle spray.

The consultant will then gently insert the flexible laryngoscope through one nostril, carefully guiding it down to your larynx. You might feel mild discomfort or a tickling sensation, but it shouldn't be painful. The procedure usually takes just a few minutes.

What Happens During Rigid Laryngoscopy?

Rigid laryngoscopy is performed under general anaesthetic in a hospital operating theatre. Once you're asleep, your consultant inserts the rigid laryngoscope through your mouth, providing a clear view of your vocal cords and throat structures. This method allows your consultant to perform procedures such as taking tissue samples (biopsies), removing lesions directly, or thoroughly examining any areas of concern. After the procedure, you will spend some time recovering from the anaesthetic before returning home, typically the same day.

After Your Laryngoscopy

Following the procedure, your throat may feel slightly numb or uncomfortable for a short period. This sensation usually resolves quickly. You should be able to resume normal activities almost immediately after flexible laryngoscopy, while recovery from rigid laryngoscopy may take slightly longer due to general anaesthetic effects. Your consultant will discuss the findings clearly with you and outline any next steps or treatments required.

Risks And Complications

Laryngoscopy is generally very safe, but like all medical procedures, there can occasionally be minor risks:
– Mild nose or throat discomfort
– Rare minor nosebleeds
– Very rarely, reaction to local anaesthetic or general anaesthetic (rigid laryngoscopy)

Your consultant will discuss these risks with you in detail before your procedure.

Why Choose Birmingham Head And Neck Clinic?

At Birmingham Head and Neck Clinic, we understand the importance of thorough investigation and compassionate care. Our experienced ENT specialists provide expert diagnosis and personalised treatment plans tailored to your needs. We use advanced, state-of-the-art equipment for clear and accurate results, ensuring you receive the highest standard of care.

Contact Us

If you're experiencing persistent throat symptoms or voice problems, don't delay seeking expert advice. Book a consultation with our specialist ENT consultants at Birmingham Head and Neck Clinic and take the first step towards effective treatment and lasting relief.