
Muscle Tension Dysphonia

Dysphonia refers to an abnormal voice, and can include difficulties with pitch, loudness, quality, flexibility or combinations thereof. Muscle Tension Dysphonia (MTD) occurs when there is excess laryngeal and extra laryngeal muscle activity, that is, when the muscles around the larynx are tight or tense. Tension in the muscles of the larynx and neck can prevent smooth voice production.

Individuals with MTD may have a voice quality with some or all of these characteristics:

- Breathy
- Strained
- Hoarse
- High pitched
- Strained and strangled

Individuals with MTD may experience some of the following symptoms:

- A feeling of 'tightness' in the neck
- A sensation of a lump in the throat
- Pain in the frontal neck region and upper chest
- Upper chest and shoulder tension
- Lack of control over breathing, leading to reduced vocal support

Treatment for MTD aims to reduce the muscular tension in and surrounding the larynx, and to promote healthy and efficient voice production for the future.

This is achieved through

- Voice therapy with a Speech Pathologist, who will help you to use your voice efficiently with less muscle tension and effort. The speech pathologist will also assist you to implement voice care strategies at work, socially and in your leisure activities.
- Reducing stress levels.

