

Vocal Cord Dysfunction (VCD) and Habit Cough

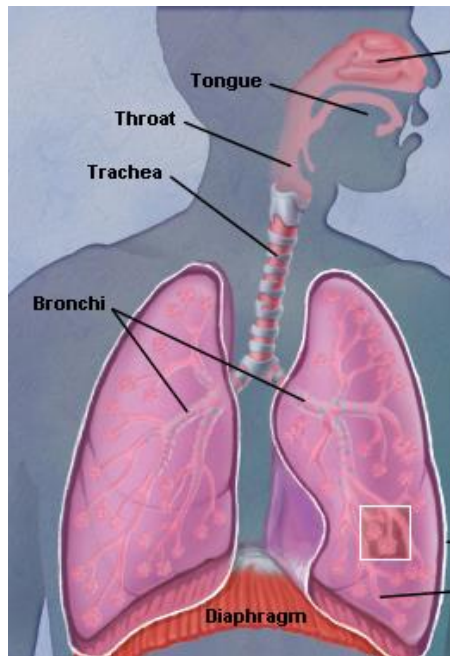
Tracy E. Herring, MA, CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist
CHOA at Scottish Rite Hospital



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Definition of VCD

“A disorder caused by episodic unintentional paradoxical adduction of the vocal folds.” ~ *Vertigan & Gibson 2016*



Abducted Vocal Cords



Adducted Vocal Cords

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmNwpJf1zUQ>



Symptoms of VCD

- Trouble getting air in
- Throat and/or chest tightness
- Noisy breathing/stridor
- Often triggered by exercise
- Can be exacerbated by stress/anxiety, extreme temperatures, allergens or more strenuous exercise
- Inhalers do not help
- Episodes typically resolve relatively quickly with rest



Diagnosis and Treatment of VCD

- Rule out underlying medical etiology
- Evaluation by SLP in the Voice Disorders Program
- Recommendations for referrals
- Short-term Voice Therapy with SLP
 - Correct posture, decrease upper musculoskeletal tension and improve breathing
 - Utilize preventative and rescue breathing strategies during/after exercise
 - Ultimately reverse laryngeal motor pattern to allow full return to school, activities of daily living, sports and/or exercise



Definition of Habit Cough

Also known as chronic refractory cough, habit cough is “a cough that has lasted for longer than eight weeks **and** is refractory to appropriate medical management.”. ~ *Vertigan & Gibson 2016*



Symptoms of Habit Cough

- Tends to be dry and non-productive
- Repetitive, rhythmic pattern
- Absent during sleeping
- Non-responsive to medications
- Can be exacerbated by stress/anxiety, extreme temperatures, allergens or exercise
- Minimal self-awareness of presence of cough, but can sometimes feel irritation or a tickle in the throat
- Often mouth breathe



Diagnosis and Treatment of Habit Cough

- Rule out underlying medical etiology
- Evaluation by SLP in the Voice Disorders Program
- Recommendations for referrals
- Short-term Voice Therapy with SLP
 - Correct posture, decrease upper musculoskeletal tension and improve breathing
 - Increase self-awareness of habit cough
 - Learn cough replacement and cough suppression strategies
 - Ultimately eliminate presence of habit cough



Impact of VCD and Habit Cough on Quality of Life

- Physical side effects such as throat pain, chest pain, reduced strength/endurance, laryngeal trauma and voice changes
- Social costs such as embarrassment and isolation
- Negative attention from classmates and school personnel
- Decreased participation in academic classes, PE and extracurricular activities
- School absenteeism
- Financial costs from healthcare consultations, medications and reduced productivity



Referral for VCD or Habit Cough Evaluation

- Direct parents to their physician
- Parent can schedule an evaluation with the Voice Disorders Program by calling 404.785.7100
- Questions? Contact Tracy E. Herring, MA, CCC-SLP
 - 404.785.8457
 - tracy.herring@choa.org

