

Ways to Decrease Throat Clearing

Throat Clearing

Your vocal folds slam together when you clear your throat. If you clear your throat enough, your vocal folds can become irritated and swollen.

Constant throat clearing can lead to a hoarse voice and can even cause masses (bumps) on your vocal fold.

One reason for clearing your throat may be because you feel mucus or something else caught in your throat.

Clearing your throat doesn't clear the mucus; it moves the mucus to the side of your vocal folds. The mucus keeps moving back to where it started which restarts the cycle of clearing your throat.

Break the Habit

Throat clearing can become a habit. You may be doing it without even knowing it. If you aren't sure, ask a family member or friend to help you listen for when you clear your throat.

It is important to break the habit to protect your vocal folds. One way is to do something else instead. (See the list in the next section.)

Your goal is to use 1 or 2 substitutes from the list instead of clearing your throat.

What to Do Instead of Clearing Your Throat

Practice using all 7 ways. Select the 1 or 2 that feel most comfortable. Your goal is to use these instead of clearing your throat.

1. Swallow your saliva with a "squeezing" hard swallow.
2. Take a sip of water.
3. Suck on ice chips.
4. Use a silent cough. Whisper the word "huh" from your belly without making a sound and then swallow. This is like a cough but without using your voice.
5. Hum on an "M" and then swallow.
6. Use a light, gentle cough (like tapping your vocal folds together) and then swallow.
7. Silently count to 10 and then swallow.