

# Esophageal Reflux and the Larynx What is the Connection?

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Esophageal reflux often times is diagnosed when laryngeal dysfunction is clinically identified. There are known associations between esophageal events and laryngeal events which may be pathologic or simply physiologic. There are also common events that can occur simultaneously but are in fact not causally related. The esophagus and larynx are connected with sensory and motor reflexes and modulators, which are essential to normal function but may also become a portion of the clinical symptom complex. There are also laryngo-tracheal consequences of abnormal gastro-esophago-laryngo fluid, and aerosolized reflux. These clinical presentations

will include hoarseness due to induced mucosal changes, persistence of lesions such as granulomas, cough, and irritable larynx symptoms from changes in the esophago-laryngeal reflex. Further, there may be exacerbation of asthma symptoms and tracheal and subglottic inflammation and stenosis. Diagnostic and treatment strategies are difficult due to a lack of well-defined diagnostic criteria, difficulty in confirming the association between observed esophageal events and the laryngeal pathology, and a lack of simple and highly successful treatment options.