



Find Relief from **Voice and Swallowing Disorders**

Voice and swallowing issues can manifest in a variety of ways and impact many aspects of life, including speaking, eating and drinking. At Carolina ENT, our expert and empathetic providers are here to help provide personalized treatment so these disorders do not interrupt your daily routine.

Common Voice and Swallowing Disorders

- Dysphagia refers to difficulty swallowing and is often a symptom of another issue rather than a diagnosis. It can result from issues in the throat or esophagus.
- A chronic cough is a cough that lasts longer than eight weeks.
- Chronic laryngitis refers to vocal cord inflammation due to overuse, irritation or infection that lasts longer than three weeks.
- Spasmodic dysphonia is a neurological condition that causes the larynx to spasm involuntarily.
- Laryngopharyngeal reflux occurs when stomach contents back up to the throat. It is similar to GERD but does not always result in a burning sensation in the chest.
- Zenker's diverticulum is a pouch that forms in the throat, resulting in dysphagia.

Symptoms of Voice and Swallowing Disorders

Symptoms of these conditions can include hoarseness, difficulty breathing or speaking, changes to the voice and trouble eating. You may also experience weight loss if you are having difficulty eating.

Treatment for These Conditions

Your team at Carolina ENT will help determine the best steps for you to find your voice. While specific treatments will depend on the disorder you are experiencing, options may include medication, lifestyle changes, speech therapy or surgery. Your provider will walk you through the treatment process and answer any questions that may have arisen.

Call Carolina ENT at (828) 322-2183 to learn more about treatment for voice and swallowing conditions and get started with a personalized plan of care.

Causes a Chronic Cough— **AND HOW TO TREAT IT**

A cough is considered chronic when it lasts more than eight weeks in adults and more than four weeks in children. A chronic cough can have a variety of negative impacts on your life, including interrupted sleep, lightheadedness or vomiting.

CAUSES OF A CHRONIC COUGH

Common causes of a chronic cough include:

- Postnasal drip, or when extra mucus drops down the back of your throat
- Asthma, or chronic lung inflammation or narrowing of the airways
- GERD, or when stomach acid flows back up your esophagus
- Infections, such as pneumonia, flu, a cold or another infection of the upper respiratory tract
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), an inflammatory lung condition that limits airflow

One of the biggest risk factors for a chronic cough is being a smoker or exposure to secondhand smoke.

TREATING A CHRONIC COUGH

Your Carolina ENT provider will treat your chronic cough based on what is causing it. There may be more than one underlying cause.

If your chronic cough results from allergies or postnasal drip, antihistamines, corticosteroids or decongestants may be recommended. For patients with asthma, medication can reduce inflammation and open the airways. Antibiotics can treat bacterial or fungal infections, and acid blockers can help manage acid reflux. No matter the cause, our team is here to provide personalized and effective treatment for you.

Call Carolina ENT at (828) 322-2183 to schedule an appointment to treat your chronic cough.



How Does Speech Therapy Help with Swallowing Problems?

Speech therapy can help patients of all ages with many symptoms, including difficulty swallowing. Also known as dysphagia, trouble swallowing can cause discomfort and impact many areas of your life. At Carolina ENT, our speech-language pathologist Aimee Perkins will work to help you find relief from this uncomfortable symptom.

WHAT IS DYSPHAGIA?

Dysphagia refers to difficulty swallowing. It may result in pain when swallowing food or drink, or it may result in an inability to swallow easily. This condition can be the result of:

- Injury or trauma to the throat or face
- Strep throat, viral tonsillitis or other infections
- Gastrointestinal diseases, including GERD
- Muscular disorders
- Neurological disorders

SWALLOWING EXERCISES FOR DYSPHAGIA

Your speech therapist will assess your symptoms and medical history to determine what is causing your symptoms. Diagnostic tests may include a barium swallow test, which uses X-ray technology to show how your mouth and throat move as liquid or food passes through your oral cavity through your pharynx and esophagus.

Depending on the underlying cause of your dysphagia, your speech therapist may recommend:

- Tongue movements to strengthen muscles
- Swallowing exercises to improve strength
- Taking smaller bites of food
- Eating slowly
- Using customized oral devices to improve coordination between your lips and tongue
- Practicing the best posture, including keeping 90 degrees between your chin and throat and lifting your chin when swallowing
- Education on proper nutrition specific to the condition causing the dysphagia

Swallowing is something we do every day, and it can be stressful to have difficulties with this process. But the speech team at Carolina ENT is here to help you find confidence and relief with personalized care.

**Call Carolina ENT at (828) 322-2183 to
get started with treatment.**



Want To Know More **About Throat Care?**

If you're looking for additional details about throat concerns like chronic cough, voice and swallowing, our website is a great resource.

You'll find a wealth of information on these conditions, including symptoms and options for treatment. Visit carolinaearnosethroat.com and browse the Throat or Speech & Swallowing sections of the ENT drop-down menu to get started.

Here are a few other websites our team recommends if you're looking for credible, up-to-date information.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association—This organization strives to make effective communication accessible for everyone. www.asha.org/public

Allergy & Asthma Network—This organization unites and advocates for the 60 million Americans with asthma, allergies and related conditions. allergyasthmanetwork.org

Thank you for trusting Carolina ENT with your care. If you need support for throat, voice or swallowing concern, please get in touch with us today!

www.carolinaearnosethroat.com

(828) 322-2183

Three convenient locations

Hickory

304 10th Avenue NE
Hickory, NC 28601

Lincolnton

1446 Gaston Street, Ste. 101
Lincolnton, NC 28092

Morganton

149 W. Parker Road, Ste. C
Morganton, NC 28655



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