

Upper Cape Ear, Nose & Throat, PC

Douglas G. Mann, MD, FACS
200A Jones Road, Falmouth, MA 02540 ~ 508.540.0900

LASER ASSISTED UVULOPALATOPHARYNGOPLASTY (LAUP)

Purpose

LAUP is a procedure performed to treat snoring and mild sleep disorders. People who snore produce the snoring sound from vibration of the soft palate and uvula, and sometimes the tongue. Snoring can be treated by several means. Individuals who are overweight should lose weight. This usually relieves the snoring, in addition to being good for your overall health. Dental appliances can be used to hold the jaw forward to hold the airway open. They are effective for some individuals, but need to be worn all of the time and do not provide permanent relief. Individuals with nasal obstruction may benefit from medication to open their breathing passages. Nasal appliances such as Breathe-Rite strips or nasal surgery can help improve nasal breathing.

LAUP is a procedure to remove part of the soft palate and most of the uvula. It is done in stages to allow removal of just enough tissue to alleviate the snoring, but not remove too much of the soft palate.

Procedure

The procedure is usually done in the office using local anesthesia, but can also be done in a surgicenter using local anesthesia with sedation. The throat is numbed using sprays and injections of anesthetic such as novocaine. A laser is used to vaporize portions of the soft palate and most of the uvula. At the conclusion of the procedure you will receive instructions and prescriptions before going home.

Recovery

When you go home you should rest with your head elevated. There will be pain in the throat region once the anesthetic wears off. The pain lasts for 7 to 10 days. Narcotics and other medications will be prescribed to minimize the pain as much as possible. Most patients are able to return to work a few days after the procedure. It is important to keep drinking even though the throat is sore. It is difficult to swallow at first, and patients need to modify their diet. Cool liquids, popsicles, water ice and sorbet seem to work best for the first few days. It is best to avoid citrus juices (orange, grapefruit, etc.) and spicy foods as they may burn. It is also a good idea to avoid milk and ice cream as they thicken the saliva. We ask that you not use a straw, as the sucking action may promote bleeding. Whenever the patient feels up to resuming their normal diet it is all right to do so. Remember - the more you drink the faster you will recover!

Ear pain is common after LAUP. The same nerves that go to the back of the throat

also provide the ear with sensation. The area where the surgery was done usually has a gray or tan appearance. This does not mean the site is infected. Bad breath is also very common due to the bacteria that grow in the surgical site.

Risks and Complications

The goal of the procedure is to eliminate or substantially reduce snoring. It is possible that despite multiple procedures there may still be problems with snoring. This is uncommon, but possible. If there is initial success it is possible to have recurrence of the snoring. This can occur as a result of weight gain. It can also result from stretching of the tissues as a result of the aging process. In certain cases further surgery may relieve the problem

The procedure is done in stages. The surgeon will remove as much as can be safely removed to minimize the number of procedures. Some patients will require only one procedure, but others will require two, three, or even four procedures.

The soft palate closes the nose off from the mouth during swallowing and for the creation of certain speech sounds. If too much of the soft palate is removed there will be problems with leakage of liquids into the nose while swallowing. There may also be problems with escape of air during speech. The procedure is done in stages to try to prevent this problem. Because of this precaution it occurs very uncommonly.

The uvula functions in sweeping the back wall of the throat to clear mucus coming down from the nose. The uvula will be substantially reduced in size by the procedure. It may not function adequately to sweep the back of the throat. This can lead to a persistent sense of being unable to clear the throat. This can occur to varying degrees in up to half of patients who have this procedure.

Certain languages (not English) use a guttural "R" sound for some words. You will not be able to make these sounds after removal of most of the uvula.

Bleeding and infection are possible, as with any surgery. There is not a high incidence of either of these complications with this type of surgery.

I have read, understand, and accept the risks and complications of this operation. Alternative treatments have been discussed with me and I want to go ahead with the surgery.

Witness

Patient Signature

Date