

## **Fat Injection**

**Fat injection or “lipoinjection” is a technique to provide permanent correction of mild vocal cord weakness or paresis. Weakness of the vocal cord results in incomplete vocal cord closure during voice production. Poor vocal cord closure during voice production is associated with effortful voicing, voice fatigue, pain with voice use, hoarseness, and a feeling that air is lost when speaking. Poor vocal cord closure can be caused by many factors including vocal cord weakness (paralysis or paresis). Vocal cord paralysis occurs most commonly following surgical injury near the vocal cord nerve (vagus or recurrent laryngeal nerve). Surgeries that can cause vocal cord nerve injury are thyroidectomy, carotid endarterectomy, anterior spine surgery and thoracic surgery. Another cause of vocal cord paralysis is an upper respiratory or viral infection. Fat injection can also be used in patients with bowed vocal cords resulting from aging or Parkinson’s disease. In addition, this procedure can further rebuild the weakened vocal cord after thyroplasty surgery.**

**Fat injection involves taking a small amount of fat from your abdomen using liposuction. The fat cells are purified and transferred into an injection syringe and injected into your vocal fold. Over one year, approximately 20-40% of the fat will develop a blood supply and live in the vocal fold muscle. To provide for this yield, it is necessary to over inject fat during the procedure. This will result in significant hoarseness that lasts 2-4 weeks. In some instances, the percent take is poor (especially in older people and those who have received laryngeal radiation) and a repeat injection may be necessary. Since a long period of hoarseness frequently follows a fat injection, we will help you choose the most appropriate time for you to have this procedure.**

**Fat injection is an outpatient procedure performed in the operating room under general anesthesia. The procedure takes about an hour. You are then taken to the recovery room where you will recover from the anesthetic, be given your postoperative instructions and return home with the person that you choose. There is very little discomfort following this procedure. The main area of discomfort is usually the site of the liposuction. You will be sent home with a prescription for pain medication that you can take if needed. However you may find that over the counter Tylenol or (if you do not have any problems with bleeding) Ibuprofen may be all that is needed. You will be asked to return to the clinic in two weeks so that we can evaluate how you are doing after the procedure.**