

LARYNX

FUNCTION

The primary function of larynx is to protect the lower airway by closing abruptly upon mechanical stimulation, thereby halting respiration and preventing the entry of foreign matter into the airway.

Other functions of the larynx include the production of sound (phonation), coughing, control of ventilation (breathing), and acting as sensory organ.

CARTILAGENOUS PLATES

The larynx is composed of an external skeleton of cartilage plates that prevents collapse of the structure. The plates are fastened together by membranes and muscle fibers.

The outer cartilagenous walls forms the area of the front of the neck referred to as the Adam's apple.

VOCAL CORDS

Two fibrous bands ^(two bands of muscles) called vocal cords are present located in the larynx. The vocal cords are composed of mucous membrane stretched horizontally across the larynx.

FUNCTIONS OF VOCAL CORDS

IN BREATHING:

Each time a person inhales, air goes into the nose or mouth, then through the larynx, down the trachea, and into the

lungs. When a person exhales, the air goes the other way. The vocal cords are relaxed during breathing, and air moves through the space between them without making any sound.

IN PHONATION:

The vocal cords tighten up and move closer together for speech. Air from the lungs is forced between them and makes them vibrate, producing the sound of a voice.

GLOTTIS

Glottis is the region which contains the vocal cords and is lined by the mucous membrane.

EPIGLOTTIS

The epiglottis is a flap in the throat that keeps food from entering the windpipe and the lungs. The flap is made of elastic cartilage covered with a mucous membrane, attached to the entrance of the larynx.

ANATOMY OF LARYNX

Anatomically, the internal cavity of larynx can be divided into three sections:

1. Supraglottis
2. Glottis
3. Subglottis

I. SUPRAGLOTTIS

Supraglottis is the upper part of the larynx; the area above the vocal cords.

3. SUBGLOTTIS

The subglottis or subglottic region is the lower portion of the larynx, extending from just beneath the vocal cords down the top of the trachea. The structures in the subglottis are implicated in the regulation of the temperature of the breath.