

These are the organs of the throat.
If infected, tonsils and adenoids can be removed.



Tonsils



Adenoids



Uvula

Down the Hatch

YOUR TONGUE IS hairy. That's not an insult. It's a fact. Millions of microscopic 'gustatory hairs' cover your tongue. These aren't real hairs. They're tips of taste cells, which cluster in onion-shaped bunches called taste buds. Your taste buds are too small to see, but stick out your tongue and you'll see a landscape of bumps called papillae. These house your taste buds as well as the nerve endings that scream 'Hot!' when you attack a pizza.

While your tongue's out, look around your mouth. The tissue dangling from the back of your throat is your uvula. It closes the nasal passage when you swallow. The dark tube beyond the uvula is your pharynx, or throat. Food and air start their downwards journey there. Lift your tongue to see your frenulum. This membrane anchors the tongue.

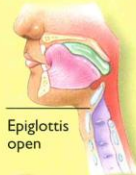
Your teeth and palate are more familiar. Your teeth cut and mash food. They mix it with saliva to form a bolus, the lump you swallow. Your tongue, lips and cheek muscles push the bolus along your palate. From there, it slides into your throat. Together, your mouth and throat support some of your body's most vital and enjoyable functions. They let you breathe, eat, speak and savour a slice of pizza.



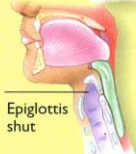
HANDS ON

Gulp!

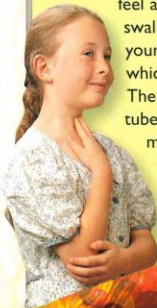
Your body has a life-saving trapdoor. It's a flap of cartilage above your windpipe called the epiglottis. When you swallow, the epiglottis swings shut, closing the windpipe so no food gets in. Place your fingers on your throat. The ridges you feel are your air passage. Now swallow. The saliva goes down your food tube, or oesophagus, which lies behind the windpipe. The oesophagus is a muscled tube. When you swallow, the muscles tighten and relax, sending food or saliva downwards.



Epiglottis open

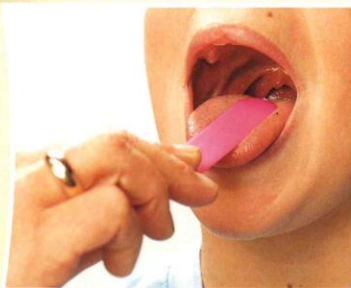


Epiglottis shut



THE MIGHTY TONGUE

Your tongue is a mighty and mobile muscle. It licks, lifts and darts as it forms sounds, moves food or teases your brother. It also springs up to guard your throat against objects that could choke you.



INSIDE STORY

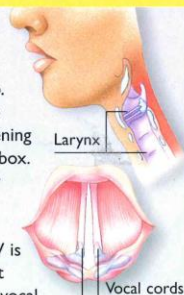
How We Speak

Your lips aren't all that move when you speak. Your vocal cords do, too. The vocal cords are two springy bands at the opening of your larynx, or voice box. They form a V-shape. Air from your lungs flows through this opening.

When you breathe, the V is open. When you speak, it narrows. Air causes the vocal cords to vibrate, creating sound. The more forceful the air, the louder the sound.

Although vocal cords produce sound, the mouth creates speech. Your teeth, tongue and lips shape raw sounds into consonants and vowels. Air spaces in your skull give your voice its own unique tone.

You can feel your larynx at the very top of your throat. It is made up of nine cartilages. The biggest of these is the thoracic cartilage, or Adam's apple. Your vocal cords attach to the Adam's apple and to the smaller cartilages behind it.



Larynx

Vocal cords



PUCKER UP

Call them smoochers, smackers, or just plain lips – but you wouldn't want to be without them.

You use your lips to eat, to seal your mouth closed while you chew and to shape sounds so you can speak. Just try talking with them closed. Your lips are also the body's most sensitive thermometer. They detect food that's too hot or cold. And do you want to whistle or kiss? Well, pucker up!

SAY 'AHHH'

A peep at your throat reveals lots about your health, but your doctor must first get your tongue out of the way. Then the doctor can spot infection in your throat or tonsils. With a special tool called a laryngoscope, he or she can check your voice box, too. Tonsil infections are most common in childhood.

