

## Cat's Meow Sounds Strange

**CatChannel veterinary expert, Arnold Plotnick, DVM, explains what could cause a cat's voice to change.**

*By Arnold Plotnick, DVM*

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**Q:** My 7-year-old cat's meow has changed, and now he sounds hoarse. Could you tell me why?

**A:** There are several possible reasons for your cat's change in voice. Viral upper respiratory infections (herpes virus and/or calicivirus) are a common cause. In most cases, the cat will exhibit other signs of a respiratory infection, such as runny eyes, snotty nose and lots of sneezing. These viruses can cause laryngitis on occasion, and a hoarse or lost voice can be the result.

Less common causes include tumors involving the vocal cords or larynx and a condition called laryngeal paralysis, in which the nerve that controls the vocal folds becomes damaged, causing the larynx not to open properly, resulting in a change of voice.

Even though most cases are due to upper respiratory infections, which are fairly benign, a change in voice should be evaluated by your veterinarian. In most cases, a cause is never identified. However, your vet might want to sedate your cat to perform a detailed evaluation of the throat and vocal cords to make sure there are no masses or obstructions and to evaluate for laryngeal paralysis.