

Your voice is your most effective communication asset. Keeping a good voice is important, especially if your work makes heavy demands on it. Even speakers with naturally good voices benefit from being aware of the principles of voice production and management.

Projection of the voice is important for anyone using the voice in a large space or over background noise. It is achieved by good central breathing, good chest and head resonance and sufficient mouth opening, use of forms of voice emphasis, for example alteration of pitch and pace rather than volume may be helpful.

What is Voice disorder?

A voice disorder may cause your voice to sound hoarse, croaky or whispery and may sound to others as if you have a sore throat or laryngitis. You may experience a dry, tickly sensation which makes you want to cough or clear your throat.

You may find that your voice is worse first thing in the morning, last thing at night or after prolonged use. Occasionally you may feel that you have to force your voice in order for people to hear you.

Voice problems can vary in degree or severity, ranging from mild hoarseness to complete voice loss for prolonged periods of time.

Causes

A voice disorder is usually the result of vocal abuse and/or misuse. Vocal abuse resulting in trauma to the vocal cords includes:

- Shouting, screaming and cheering;
- Speaking loudly (e.g. talking over background noise);
- Strained vocalisations (e.g. lifting heavy objects and talking simultaneously);
- Excessive talking/ over-use of the voice;
- Excessive throat clearing and/or coughing;
- Singing using an inappropriate vocal technique or in certain environmental conditions (e.g. smoky, noisy).
- Voice misuse while the vocal cords are in a weakened condition e.g. due to an allergy or upper respiratory tract infection.
- A non-speaking activity that can harm the vocal mechanism e.g. inhalation of dust or cigarette smoke.

Vocal misuse:

is the incorrect use of the vocal mechanism and is usually accompanied by excessive muscle tension that directly affects the larynx and vocal cord vibration.

Looking after your voice

The effects of vocal abuse/misuse may subside if the voice is used with care. You can look after your voice by:

ENT

Caring for your Voice



An information leaflet for patients.

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