



Department of Otolaryngology / Head and Neck Surgery
Center for Voice Disorders

Vocal Hygiene

Increase fluid intake to 32-64 ounces of water per day.

Avoid excessive or frequent throat clearing - try sipping water instead.

Frequent throat-clearing or coughing can injure the vocal cords.

Get plenty of sleep. Fatigue can cause the voice to sound hoarse.

Use plenty of breath support. Your lungs are the generator of the voice. Take advantage of them.

Do not speak in sentences that are too long. This causes you to vocalize with inadequate breath support at the end of your air stream. Shorter sentences, with a deep breath in-between, optimizes breath support.

Minimize caffeine, alcohol and dairy intake. These can dry out the vocal cords and/or create thick mucous.

Avoid menthol throat lozenges. These can dry the throat.

Avoid smoking and noxious fumes. These are irritating and damaging to the vocal cords.

Be aware of background noise. Raising your voice above others in a loud environment can cause straining and vocal abuse.

Watch your volume and posture of the head and neck while on the telephone. This can cause uneven pressure and strain on the vocal cords.

Following the above recommendations should decrease your chance of developing vocal injury or hoarseness. If a voice problem does occur, and persists for more than 2 weeks -- consult with your laryngologist.

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