

“TO SOOTHE OR ABUSE” VOCAL ABUSE AND HYGIENE

Many teachers and some students have voice problems. But, housewives with small children are the #1 group of vocal abusers. The most common cause of abuse is vocal nodules. These are growths on the vocal cords that cause hoarseness and other symptoms. The following symptoms suggest vocal abuse:

- ❑ Hoarse, breathy voice
- ❑ Voice fatigues (worse in the evening)
- ❑ Tickle, burning or pain in throat
- ❑ Pressure at the sternum
- ❑ Lump in throat
- ❑ Higher or lower pitch than normal
- ❑ Difficulty being heard by others
- ❑ Excessive throat clearing
- ❑ Repeated sore throats
- ❑ Voice breaks, skips or loss
- ❑ Throat tightness or fullness
- ❑ Coughing
- ❑ Difficulty singing high or low notes

USE IT (CORRECTLY) OR YOU MAY LOSE IT!

Helpful hints:

1. Use moderate volume throughout the day in all situations.
2. Avoid trying to talk in noisy situations. You tend to try to talk over the noise.
3. Avoid talking over music, television, radio etc.
4. Never shout or yell, including sporting events or faculty meetings.
5. Avoid singing unless you have good vocal training.
6. Avoid or minimize violent vocal disturbances, such as coughing, clearing the throat, sneezing, making funny noises (Donald Duck, growling, car sounds etc.), excessive crying or laughing.
7. Avoid smoking and drinking.
8. Use hand signals or a whistle to gain attention as a substitute for yelling.
9. Be sure to keep your throat moist. Drink lots of water all during the day. Dry climates are very hard on the voice.
10. If your symptoms do not improve, contact a Speech / Language Pathologist or ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat doctor).