



Beacon Hospital

Department Of Speech and Language Therapy

VOCAL CARE

1. Excessive talking

Why it's bad: Laryngeal muscles become fatigued and more liable to strain, therefore your throat gets sore.

Ways to overcome it:

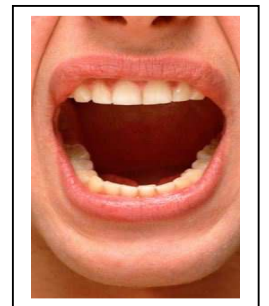
- Replan talking times to have a heavy talking period followed by a low or non talking one
- Set aside periods for voice rest
- Ensure sufficient sleep and rest before a busy day

2. Shouting or raising the voice over distance

Why it's bad: This causes you to produce voice when the larynx is tense. Increased vibration of the vocal folds causes swelling and irritation. Tensing can also hinder breathing

Ways to overcome it:

- Move closer to your listeners
- Use non-verbal attention seeking techniques
- If others are talking too loudly lower the volume of your own voice and see if they can match it
- If you must shout breathe deeply, maintain good posture and stay relaxed
- Be aware of the number of times you raise your voice and try reduced and use other ways to get the desired response
- Use a amplification system when presenting to large groups
- Make sure the person you are talking to is in the same room
- Ensure your mouth is wide open to maximise the volume



3. Talking over background noise

Why it's bad: This also increases the tension of the laryngeal muscles

Ways to overcome it:

- Closing doors or windows.
- Turning down the radio, TV or background music.
- Wait for a pause in the conversation rather than talking over others.
- Avoiding shouting in noisy places.

4. Throat Clearing and coughing

Why it's bad: Causes the vocal cords to violently bang together. This results in damage at the point of contact.

Ways to overcome it:

- Increasing the awareness of the number of times you do it
- Swallow instead of throat clearing
- Push air through the vocal cords when you feel irritation
- Sip water
- Chew gum
- If you have to clear as gently as possible

5. Talking with a tense larynx (signs include: audible breaths, dry throat, strained neck muscles)

Why it's bad: Tense muscles make the vocal cords less flexible and they vibrate together harder, therefore causing swelling. As it becomes harder to control the voice, you may compensate by raising pitch and speech may become increasingly breathy.

Ways to overcome it:

- Relax:
 - Head and neck exercises



- Chewing
- Deep breathing
- Open mouth more
- Correct posture
- Cease speaking before you run out of air
- Yawning

6. Talking with a dry throat

Why it's bad: causes increased irritation, which may cause you to throat clear or cough more

Ways to overcome it:

- Chew gum
- Drink at least 2L of water a day
- Always have water handy when talking a lot
- Avoid drinking alcohol
- Avoid medications that dry the throat



7. Smoking and talking in a smoky or air conditioned environment

Why it's bad: Dries out and irritates the larynx

Ways to overcome it:

- Quit smoking
- Avoid smoking areas
- Maintain adequate hydration
- Keep plants or a glass of water in air conditioned/ heated rooms to maintain the moisture in the air



8. Talking with a sore throat or cold:

Why it's bad: The vocal cords may collect mucous, increasing irritation

Ways to overcome it:

- Cough gentle when necessary
- Rest voice where possible
- Avoid throat lozenges.

- Speak quietly

9. Drinking alcohol while using your voice:

Why it's bad: Causes swelling of the blood vessels and roughens the vocal cords, causing irritation

Ways to overcome it:

- Drink non alcoholic drinks when singing or excessively talking

10. Reflux:

Why it's bad: Causes irritation and muscle spasm in the throat and larynx. This is due to stomach acid/secretions spilling into the throat.

Ways to overcome it:

1. Consult your GP or Gastroenterologist for medical management
2. Stay sitting upright for three hours after eating or drinking
3. Do not lie down or sleep immediately after meals
4. Try not to bend over or lean down for half an hour after meals
5. Avoid smoking or excessive alcohol
6. Sleep with an extra pillow under your head
7. Avoid trigger foods which can cause reflux
(e.g. fatty foods, caffeinated beverages & colas, spicy foods, tomato-based foods, garlic and onions)
8. Eat smaller meals (little & often approach)

For more information or to make an appointment for voice therapy, please contact the Speech and Language Therapy Department on
(01) 293 6692