

A clear and pleasant voice helps express ourselves clearly. It can also catch others' attention and facilitate our communication with people. If we have voice problems, our fun in conversation will naturally be decreased.

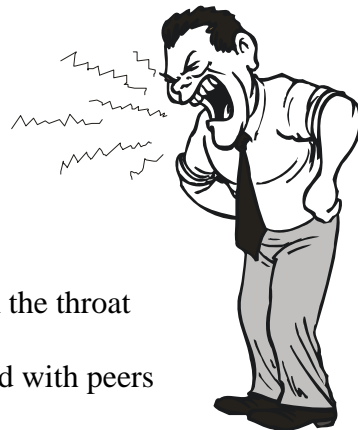


Mechanism for Producing Voice

- Sound is produced by the vibration of the vocal cords when air passes from the lungs through tracheas, larynx and vocal cords in exhalation. Then the sound converts into speech in the pharynx, larynx and oral cavity
- The two vocal cords are located inside the thyroid cartilage (commonly known as the Adam's apple) at the throat. Laryngeal muscles can control the opening and closing and also the tension of the vocal cords, and therefore affect loudness and pitch of the sound produced
- Since kids and female adults have shorter and thinner vocal cords, their pitch is higher. On the other hand, male adults have lower pitch as their vocal cords become thick and long as a result of laryngeal development in their puberty

Common Voice Problems

- Husky or harsh voice
- Weak voice
- Voice loss
- Unstable tone
- Flat tone with little variation
- Sore throat or a stretched feeling in the throat
- Volume too loud or too soft
- Pitch too high or too low (compared with peers of the same age and sex)



Causes of Voice Problems

1. Improper Voicing Habits

- Scream, yell, speak or sing vigorously and forcefully
- Speak or sing with the pitch not suitable to oneself or raise one's pitch too high or flatten it too low intentionally

- Speak too hasty and fast without enough pauses
- Clear throat habitually or cough forcefully
- Abuse the voice excessively or yell loudly when the voice is in a vulnerable state, such as suffering from a cold or fever, laryngitis, or after smoking or alcohol-drinking

2. Excessive Vocal Abuse

- Always speak or sing loudly for a long time, for example, tutoring for a long time or being a member of a cheerleading team
- Excessive vocal use such as delivering a long presentation or talking on the phone for a very long time
- Speak very loudly in a noisy environment for a long time
- Fail to use vocal function effectively as a result of hearing impairment

3. Psychological Factors

- Excessive stress causes continuous tension to the laryngeal muscles, resulting in in-coordination
- Nervousness makes one speak hastily or in an excessively high pitch
- Male adults may fail to accept the lowered pitch as a result of development of the vocal cords, so they purposely speak in a higher pitch to maintain the voice when they were children

4. Physiological Factors

- If abnormalities in vibrations of vocal cords incurred by the mentioned causes persist, the structure of vocal cords may be damaged along with physical anomalies such as inflammations, nodules, ulceration, polyps and swelling
- Impaired nervous system such as paralysis or in-coordination of the vocal cords as a result of diseases, accidents or surgeries
- Laryngeal anomalies due to other causes such as trauma, tumour or congenital structural anomalies
- Vocal variations due to hormonal changes during menstruation, pregnancy or menopause

5. Growth Process

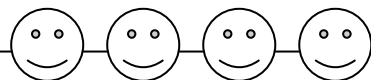
When boys reach the stage of puberty, their voice will temporarily become unstable and even out of tune as a result of rapid development of their larynx. However, their voice will become stabilized upon completion of development

Tips for Protecting your Voice

Good speaking habit and healthy lifestyle from a young age is the best way to protect your voice.

Don't ☹️	Do 😊
✗ Scream, yell or speak vigorously and forcefully	✓ Speak softly and lightly with appropriate loudness
✗ Raise your pitch too high or flatten it too low; speak too loud or too soft	✓ Use a pitch appropriate to yourself
✗ Play improper vocal games such as imitating the sound of a moving train or a shooting gun	✓ Speak at a moderate pace and pause appropriately to give sufficient rest to the vocal cords
✗ Clear your throat habitually or cough forcefully	✓ Consult a doctor promptly in case of prolonged cough or influenza, reduce vocal use at the same time
✗ Smoke, drink alcohol or eat spicy food such as hot chili sauce	✓ Drink enough water and have sufficient sleep; keep a pleasant and light mood
✗ Talk in a noisy environment	✓ Talk in a quiet environment

❖ If you suspect that you are suffering from voice problem, please consult a doctor for determining whether you need to be referred to an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist or a speech therapist for further diagnosis and treatment.



A Perfect Voice



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2010