

THE LITTLE BOOK OF
Voice Care



Warming up the voice before use is HUGELY important.

As professional voice users, teachers run a vocal marathon every day. A professional athlete wouldn't begin their work without a warm-up, neither should you.

THINK- Body, Breath, Sound, Articulation and Support

Voice and Behaviour Management

The degree of pupil misconduct can be the result of the teachers' use of voice. An uncontrolled voice can often lead to 'irritating or low-level misbehaviour.

Body Language:

- make sure your body language is not sending the wrong messages;
- arms crossed over the chest, legs crossed at ankles, too much weight over one side of the body, arms clasped behind the back can send signals that you are not in control;
- if possible always stand where the children can see your face. Pupils lip read as well as listen;
- pushing your face, especially the chin, forwards to be nearer the children affects the position of the larynx. Try not to push forwards while you speak;
- moving backwards and forwards while you are speaking makes what you are saying difficult to process and comprehend. Stand still to speak and move in the silence.

Use of Tone and Pitch:

- make a request using centred-neutral before making a demand in firm voice. Use firm and extra firm voice sparingly;

- make sure you speak using the pitch range around your centred-neutral. A correctly placed voice sounds in control.
- if you have need to make your voice louder, do this with proper breath control and not by raising the pitch;
- develop an interesting tone range based on the five voices;
- work hard on articulation. Pupils cannot process words, phrases or sentences if the endings are not clear.
- Try not to get attention on a rising noise level. Wait until the noise level is falling before asking for quiet.
- look at pupils and make eye contact when you want to engage.

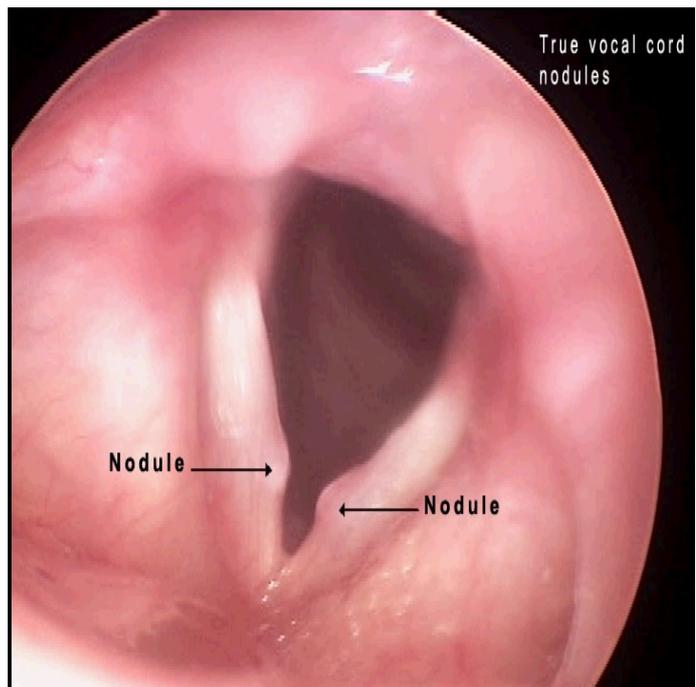
What is a Voice Problem?

(A voice problem is)..“any time your voice doesn’t work, perform, or sound as you feel it normally should, so that it interferes with communication.”

(Roy, Merrill, Thibeault, Parsa, Gray, Smith, 2004).

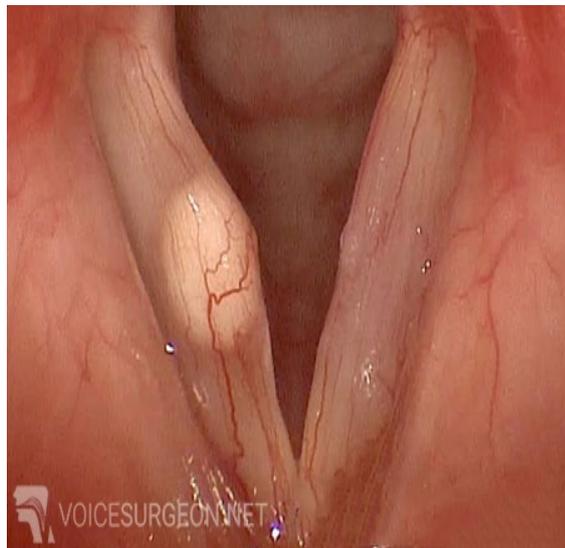
Vocal Nodules

- Vocal cord nodules are benign calluses that form along the mid-portions of the vocal cord edges, where the vocal cords collide into one another during speaking or singing.
- Depending on their size, vocal cord nodules can cause a raspy or breathy speaking voice. By impairing how the vocal cords close and / or vibrate during voice production, vocal cord nodules reduce vocal efficiency. As a result, if large, they can sometimes be associated with compensatory vocal fatigue or pain with speaking or singing.



Vocal Cyst

- A vocal cord cyst is a three dimensional, spherical or ovoid, non-cancerous structure buried below the surface of one, or rarely both, vocal cords.
- It typically causes hoarseness by either impairing how the vocal cords close and/or how they vibrate during speaking and/or singing.
- A cyst can be fluid filled (**mucus retention cyst**) or more rarely, solid (keratin, or **epidermoid cyst**).



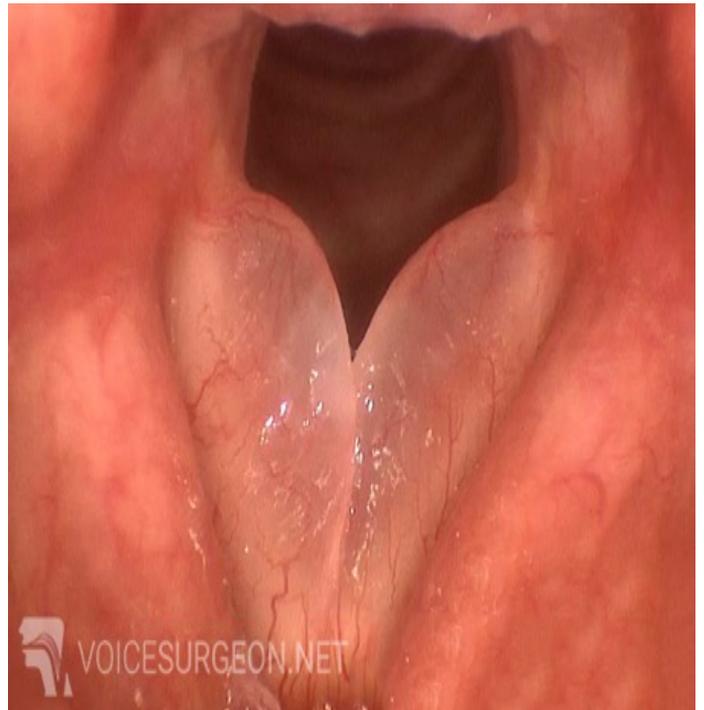
Vocal Polyp

- A vocal cord polyp is a benign usually gelatinous mass that typically occurs just below the surface membrane of the vocal cord.
- Vocal cord polyps are considered “phonotraumatic” lesions because they often result from significant voice use or voice abuse.
- They typically occur along the free edge of the vocal cords, usually at the point of maximal vibration amplitude (eg the central zone), where the physical forces are the greatest during speaking or singing.



Reinke's Oedema

- Reinke's oedema of the vocal cords, also called smoker's polyps of the vocal cords, is chronic swelling and inflammation of the surface and vibratory layer of the vocal Cords.
- It is almost exclusively a condition that affects smokers. Because the vocal cords in patients with this disorder inappropriately develop more mass (but remain pliable), they continue to vibrate during speaking but at a slower rate.
- This results in a deepened voice, which is most noticeable in women, who typically have higher speaking pitches than men.



Signs and Symptoms

Loss of voice

Breathy voice

Rough/husky/hoarse voice (as if you have a cold)

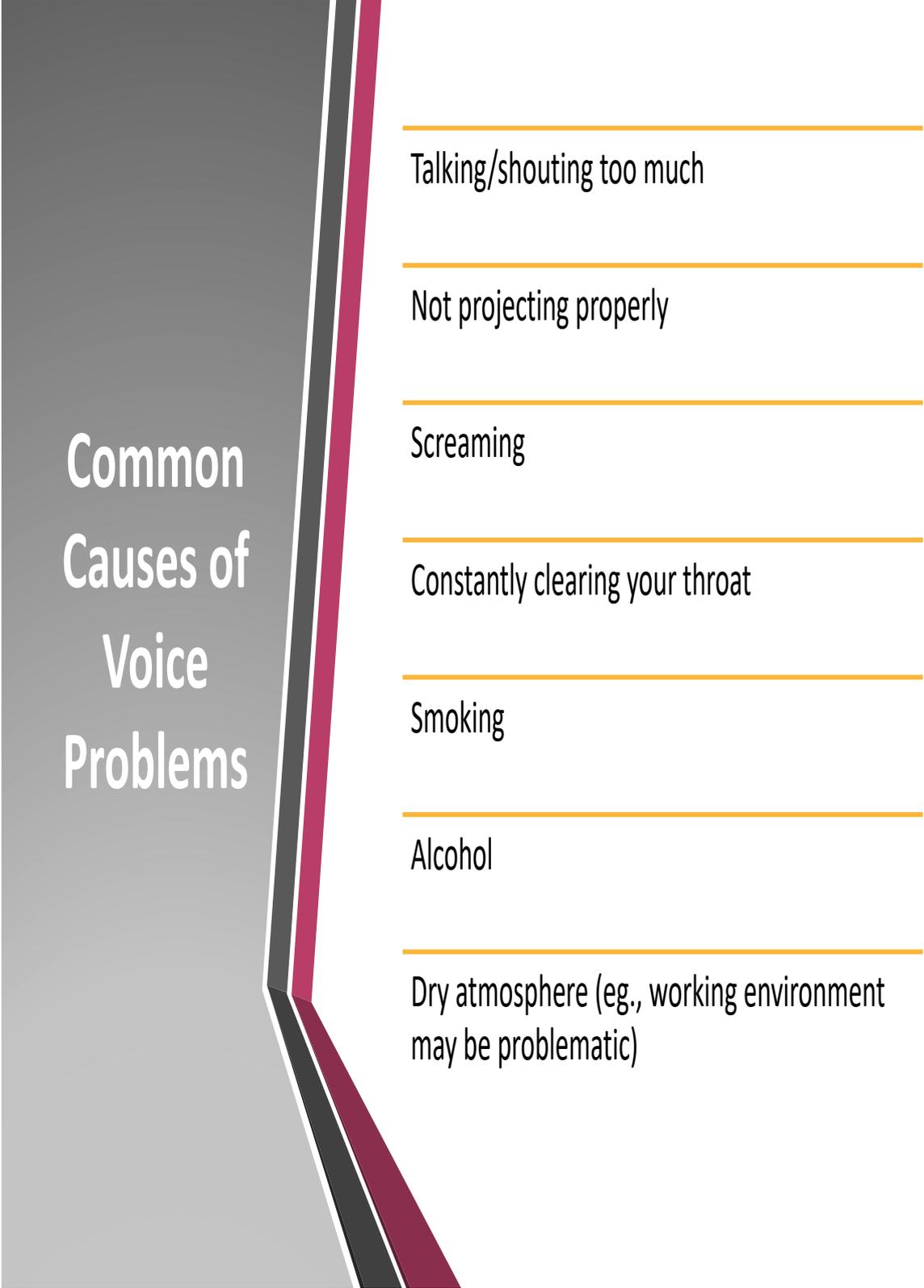
Pitch breaks during conversation

Difficulty in reaching high pitch and/or loudness

Increased effort required to speak

Speaking forcefully

Pain while speaking



Common Causes of Voice Problems

Talking/shouting too much

Not projecting properly

Screaming

Constantly clearing your throat

Smoking

Alcohol

Dry atmosphere (eg., working environment may be problematic)

Shouting



Increasing the volume of the voice involves expelling the air with greater force so as to make the vocal folds vibrate more vigorously.



Similar to how a guitar string sounds louder when it is plucked more forcefully



Prolonged yelling causes the vocal fold tissues to become irritated because they are hitting against each other more violently than normal



Remember shouting will cause the listeners' brain to produce more cortisol which will increase fight, flight and fear reaction.

How to Maintain a Healthy Voice



1. Reduce Vocal Misuse

- Avoid shouting when outside/during PE
- Avoid shouting to get students' attention in class
- Avoid clearing your throat or coughing habitually
- Make sure to take a deep breath before you project



- Use methods to attract attention such as bells, whistles or clapping
- Learn to project your voice using proper breath support without tension and strain
- Allow for periods of vocal rest throughout the day



2.Improve Physical Environment

- ▶ Position yourself where it is easy for students to hear you
- ▶ Close the doors and windows to prevent external noise (remembering good ventilation)
- ▶ Try to get down to the child's level when speaking/giving feedback
- ▶ Large spaces can create echoes. In these surroundings talk slowly with clear enunciation rather than increasing volume.
- ▶ Avoid fumes (chalk, whiteboard markers) dusty or dry environments as these contain allergens that can irritate your throat.



Allow Allow for periods of voice rest
 throughout the day

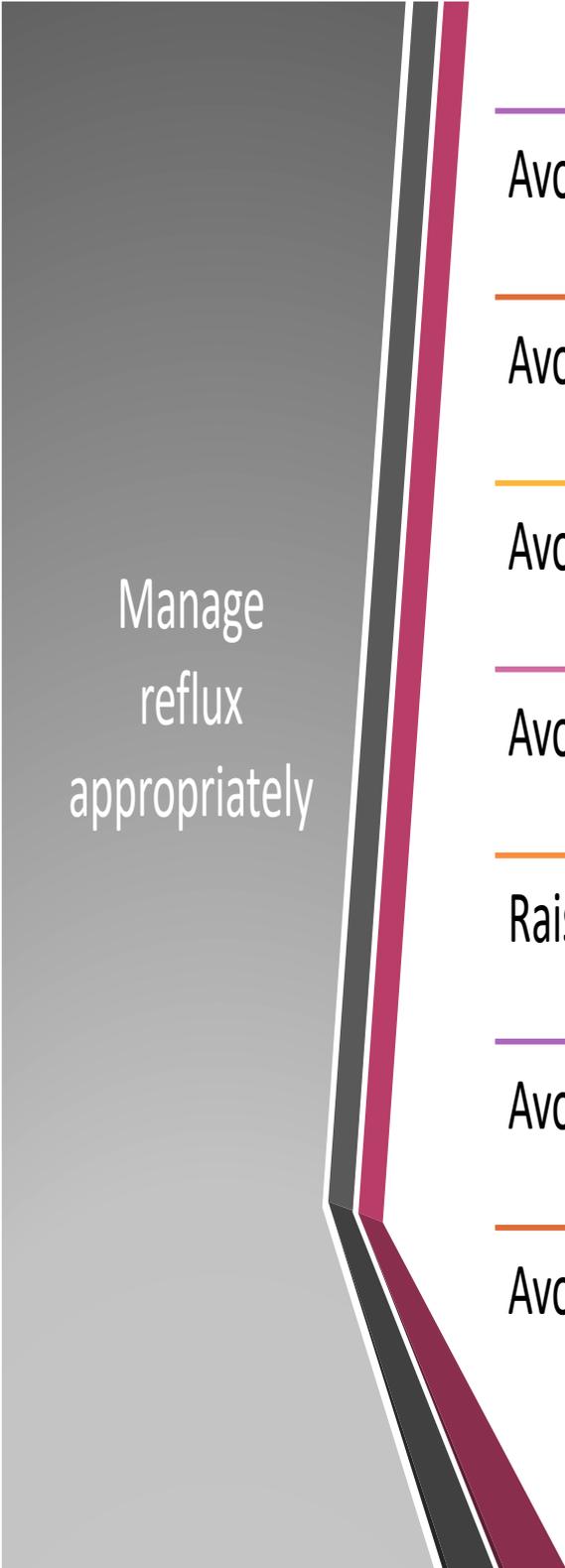
Try Try to breath through your nose rather than
 your mouth as it humidifies, warms and
 filters air more effectively

Winter In winter be aware of extremes of
 temperature

Maintain Maintain a healthy lifestyle, get
 sufficient sleep, rest, relaxation and eat
 a balanced diet and exercise regularly

Try Try not to speak if you have a sore
 throat





Manage
reflux
appropriately

Avoid Avoid fizzy, caffeinated or highly acidic drinks

Avoid Avoid fried, high fat foods, including dairy

Avoid Avoid spicy foods, tomatoes and tomato-based products

Avoid Avoid alcohol, especially white wine and spirits

Raise Raise the head of the bed

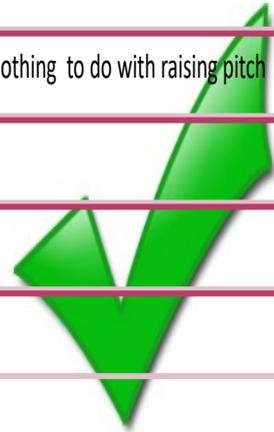
Avoid Avoid smoking

Avoid Avoid eating within three hours of bedtime

Voice care - (how to preserve your voice)

Ways to Keep your voice healthy:

Warm up	warm up with stretching exercise and simple vocalisation such as humming
Reduce	Reduce background noise where possible
Stand or sit	Stand or sit upright, beware of the slouch or slump
Stay	Stay as relaxed as possible to avoid unnecessary tension
Breathe	Breathe as deeply as you can
Increase	Increase breath when you need to project.
Remember	Remember loudness comes from good breath control and has nothing to do with raising pitch
Talk	Talk slowly and pause for breath when appropriate
Open	Open mouth for clarity and volume
Keep	Keep your vocal passage as hydrated as possible.



Drink water - up to 2 litres of pure water a day.

Voice care - (what not to do)

Activities to avoid:

- Smoking and smoky atmospheres
- Dry and dusty atmospheres – use humidifier if possible
- Chemical fumes – make sure the class room is well ventilated
- Strong cough sweets and medicated lozenges that contain menthol
- Extreme and sudden changes in temperature
- Breathing continually through your mouth
- Hot, spicy foods and very hot drinks
- Too much milk and dairy products
- Eating late at night
- Antihistamines
- Alcohol and caffeinated drinks
- Habitual throat clearing
- **SHOUTING!**



Drink water - up to 2 litres of pure water a day.

Daily vocal warm- up for busy, harassed and can't be bothered teachers

- Have a stretch and shake out your whole body
- Arms over head, to the side, stretch the ribs. Breathe in and out.
- Roll your shoulders to loosen them up
- Turn your Head to loosen your neck
- Have a big yawn and feel the air go into your lungs and come out again
- Yawn again and release the air on a sound; a yawning sound
- Yawn a few times onto sound, letting each one extend in length and volume
- Make the yawn sound into a hum and feel the vibration of the sound on your lips
- Do more than once
- Hum and chew a s if you have a very yummy toffee in your mouth
- Make sure you hum and chew through your range
- Speak or Sing the words to your favourite song, poem, speech or tongue twister
- Say, **'Hello', 'Hi', 'How are you?'**

Following warm-up drink 300ml of water