

VOICE CARE FOR KIDS

All you need to know about looking after your voice.



VoiceFit



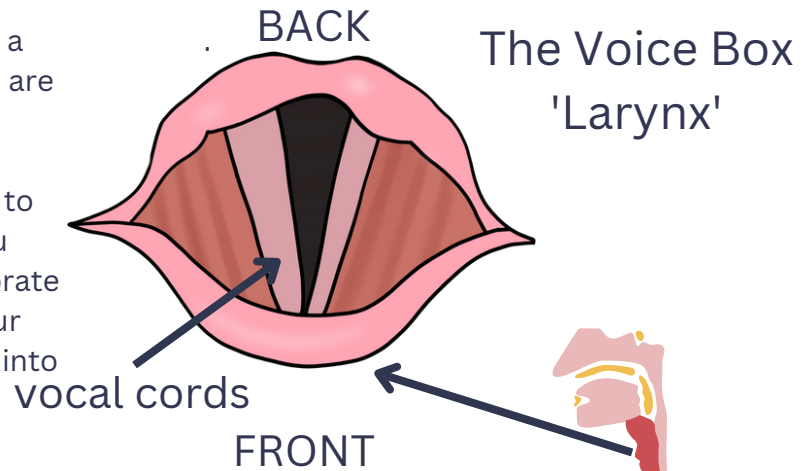
SPEECH
THERAPY

With Charlotte



WHAT IS VOICE?

At the front of your neck you have a voice box, called the larynx. Inside are two vocal cords. These are tiny muscles which sit open when you breathe. When you talk, they start to open and close very quickly as you breathe out. This makes the air vibrate and that is your voice! You use your lips and tongue to turn your voice into speech sounds.



Your voice box is small and delicate. You use your voice box all day, sometimes without realising. It helps you breathe, it helps you swallow and it helps you talk, cough, laugh and cry! It is very clever and important. When you talk, your vocal cords open and close about 300 times every second! It is important to think about how you can take care of your voice and keep it safe.



I'M A KID! WHY DO I NEED TO TAKE CARE OF MY VOICE?

Sometimes we overuse our voices e.g. talking loudly at a party, shouting at the TV, in the playground with friends. If you do this a lot it might make your throat sore or your voice sound croaky.

Do you notice that you use your voice a lot? Maybe you are very chatty, maybe you enjoy singing? Maybe you've got a big family and there is lots of chatter at home? Let's think about a few ways you can take care of your voice and keep it safe.



HOW CAN I LOOK AFTER MY VOICE?

Here are three top tips for keeping your voice healthy and safe:

1. Use a quiet voice

Using a quiet voice (but not a whisper!) is safer for your vocal cords than talking loudly or shouting. Encourage everyone in your house (including the grown ups!) to use quieter voices at home. Instead of shouting from room to room or up and down stairs, try going closer to the person you are talking to or agree on other ways to get attention like a clap or whistle. Challenge each other at home to practise using a quieter voice. If you like to create funny voices or loud animal noises see if you can make some quieter, gentler and smooth animal noises too, like a snake's hiss or a cow's moo. These sounds are healthier and safer for your voice than a lion's roar would be.



2. Drink plenty of water

Drinking enough water is important to protect your voice box and your vocal cords. If you are aged 5-10 years old you should drink 1.2 litres of water every day. This is about 2 and a half small water bottles. A fun water bottle with time lines might help remind you. Water can be flavoured to make it more interesting. Try setting reminders and water challenges with a reward for the whole family. Who will win the prize for drinking their target? You should drink more water when: it's hot, if you exercise and the more you talk.



3. Use safer alternatives to throat clearing

Sometimes people feel like their throat is dry or tickly and they try to cough or make a noise to make this feeling go away. This can hurt your vocal cords. If you get this feeling, it is safer to take some sips of water, or try taking two little sniffs and then blow out (like you're blowing out candles on a birthday cake!)



WHERE TO FIND ADDITIONAL HELP

Information for parents and carers

If you have noticed a persistent change in your child's voice quality or they report persistent throat discomfort for more than 2 weeks, then it is important to ask their GP for an opinion. If the GP thinks they should see a specialist your child will be referred to Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT). They may receive a hospital appointment so that ENT can ask specific questions and investigate the cause of the symptoms. Following that, some children are referred to a voice specialist speech and language therapist who will support the child's vocal health and may teach them some exercises to help strengthen the voice. This will depend on the cause of the voice change.

For more information and guidance contact us using the information below.



VoiceFit

Specialist Speech Therapy Services

Contact Tor Spence



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