



**WORLD VOICE DAY**  
April, 16th

# Your Voice, Your Power: Learn it, Use it, Protect it

Department of Speech and Hearing Science, College of Applied Health Sciences, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

## HOW DOES YOUR VOICE WORK?

The voice is produced from 3 subsystems, all working together:

- **Air moves from your lungs (power source)**



Air is pushed up from your lungs.

- **Your vocal folds vibrate to make sound (vibratory source)**

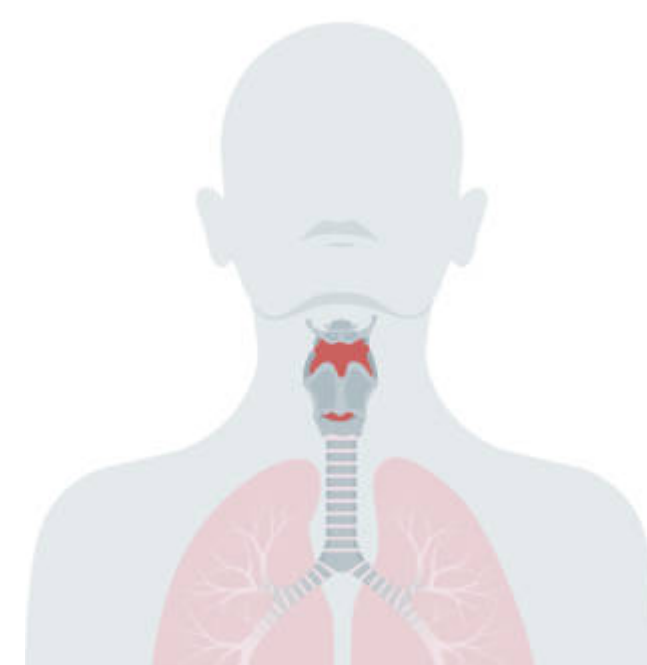


As air passes through the vocal folds (in your voice box or larynx), they vibrate (open and close), creating a wave to produce sound.

- **Your throat and mouth shape the sound into speech (shaping source)**



The throat and mouth amplifies the sound and shape it into words you speak.



## WHAT ARE SIGNS OF A VOICE PROBLEM?

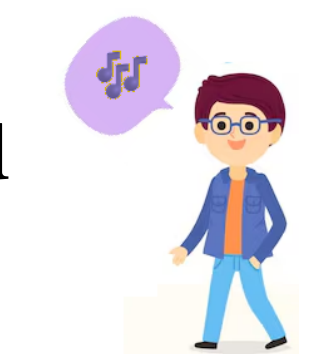
- **Hoarseness or a change in voice quality**
  - Voice sounds rough, breathy, or strained
  - Voice is not as clear or strong as usual
- **Vocal fatigue or effort**
  - Voice tires easily while talking
  - Speaking feels harder than normal
- **Pain or discomfort when speaking**
  - Throat discomfort during or after talking
  - Feeling of tightness in the throat
- **Frequent voice breaks or loss of voice**
  - Voice cuts out while speaking
  - Temporary episodes of no voice
- **Reduced vocal range or control**
  - Difficulty singing or changing pitch
  - Voice feels unstable or unpredictable
- **Throat symptoms linked to voice use**
  - Frequent throat clearing
  - Feeling of a lump or irritation in the throat



**If your voice changes last more than 2-3 weeks, consult a speech-language pathologist. Voice issues can be treated!**

## HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOUR VOICE?

- **Stay hydrated—drink plenty of water**
  - Helps keep vocal folds moist and flexible
  - Drink water throughout the day
- **Avoid yelling or speaking over loud noise**
  - Move closer instead of raising your voice
  - Use nonverbal signals when possible
- **Use a comfortable pitch and loudness**
  - Speak in a natural voice, not forced or overly loud
  - Stop if your voice feels tight or effortful
- **Take voice breaks during long periods of talking**
  - Pause to rest your voice between speaking tasks
  - Alternate speaking with quiet activities when possible
- **Limit throat clearing and coughing**
  - Sip water or swallow instead of clearing your throat
  - Be mindful of habitual throat clearing or coughing
- **Avoid smoking and exposure to irritants**
  - Smoke and pollutants can irritate the vocal folds
  - Reduce exposure to dust or chemical environments
- **Use amplification (e.g., microphone) when speaking to large groups**
  - Reduces the need to project your voice
  - Helps prevent vocal strain in noisy or large spaces



**Protect your voice. Protect your power.**

### Healthy Vocal Folds



Vocal Folds Opened

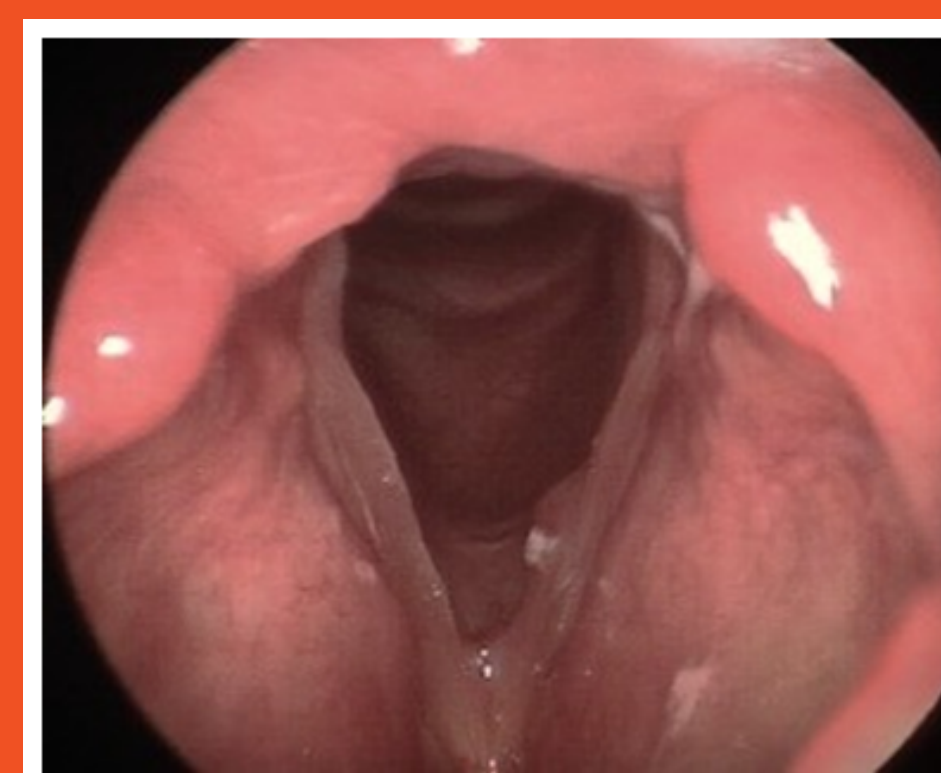


Vocal Folds Closed

### Unhealthy Vocal Folds



Vocal Nodules



Vocal Polyp

## WHO IS AT RISK FOR A VOICE PROBLEM?

- **Anyone can develop a voice problem**
  - 1 in 13 adults has a voice problem annually
  - Women are 64% more likely to have voice problems than men
  - Adults aged 60 or older are at high risk
  - Children can also have voice problems
- **People who use their voice a lot, including:**
  - Teachers
  - Singers
  - Retail workers
  - Call center workers
  - Lawyers
  - Fitness instructors and sports coaches
  - Broadcasters
  - Actors
  - Members of the clergy
  - Speech-language pathologists
- **People who talk loudly or over background noise**
- **People with frequent colds, allergies, or acid reflux**
- **Smokers or people exposed to smoke or dry air**



## WHY IS YOUR VOICE IMPORTANT?

- **Your voice helps communicate your thoughts and needs**
  - Share ideas, opinions, and information
  - Ask for help or express concerns
- **It expresses your personality and emotions**
  - Show how you feel (happy, sad, excited, frustrated)
  - Reflect your identity and personal style
- **It connects you with others**
  - Build relationships and social connections
  - Participate in conversations and group activities
- **It is essential for many jobs and daily activities**
  - Teach, lead, present, perform
  - Talk on the phone, attend meetings, or give instructions
- **It helps to be heard, understood, and confident**
  - Speak clearly so others can understand you
  - Feel confident expressing yourself
- **It plays a key role in your overall health and well-being**
  - Support social interaction and emotional health
  - Help maintain quality of life



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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