
What is vocal hygiene?

Vocal hygiene includes staying hydrated and using good voice habits to help the vocal cords work the best they can.

Why does my child need vocal hygiene?

- The vocal cords need to be slippery and wet to work best.
- If the vocal cords are dry, they can become irritated.
- Yelling, screeching and coughing can also irritate the vocal cords.
- Vocal hygiene can increase the amount of wetness for the vocal cords, which helps to decrease the irritation.
- Your child can talk better when their vocal cords are not as irritated.

What can I do to help my child?

It may be helpful to have your child:

- Drink water as advised by the doctor. Have them drink small amounts throughout the day.
- Rest their voice. This means limiting yelling, screaming, excess throat clearing and talking over other loud noises.
- Use a soft and easy “inside voice” when talking.
- Take slow, relaxed breaths, and take time to speak slowly and clearly.
- Choose some “quiet times” or “quiet rooms” to encourage less talking and a softer voice.

It is also helpful if you:

- Use a humidifier if the air in your home is dry.
- Learn the signs of stomach reflux (GE reflux) and allergies. If your child has any of these, talk with their doctor about treatment.
- Avoid smoky, dusky and dry places.

Try to decrease or stop using things that can dry out or irritate the vocal cords, such as:

- Drinks with caffeine like coffee, tea, colas and energy drinks
- Drinks with citrus like orange juice and grapefruit juice
- Cough drops

If your child takes over-the-counter medicine, talk with the doctor to make sure they need them.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.