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VOCAL HYGIENE

How to get the best mileage from your voice

When you have a voice disorder, it is important to take good care of your voice. Most voice disorders can be prevented. Here are tips to help keep your voice healthy:

- **Hydrate every day:** Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water each day. Water helps keep the vocal cords moist and gets rid of extra mucus.
- **Avoid dry, artificial interior climates (air-conditioned or heated rooms):** It is good to use a cool mist humidifier to keep your throat, lips and nose from getting dry. Steam inhalation also helps.
- **Limit coughing and throat clearing**
- **Avoid irritants:** This includes airborne irritants like smoke, dust and fumes; liquid irritants like milk, coffee and tea (caffeine tends to dry out the throat), and alcohol.
- **Do not smoke**
- **Do not whisper:** Whispering can cause vocal cord damage.
- **Avoid speaking for excessive amounts of time**
- **Avoid speaking in a noisy environment, or talking over a long distance**
- **Do not yell, scream or cheer**
- **Avoid harmful vocal patterns:** sudden tense initiation of voice, using unnatural pitch, grunting, talking in a monotone pitch, or talking when you are too tired, are all harmful to the vocal cords.
- **Avoid speaking over the natural breath cycle, squeezing out the last words without sufficient breath support.**
- **Laryngopharyngeal reflux (LPR):** LPR refers to a spill over of acid from the stomach into the throat. If left untreated it may inflame the vocal cords and cause permanent damage to your voice.