

Prevention

Professional use of voice

Observe your vocal apparatus

When the vocal apparatus works above its possibilities, it gives early symptoms, which you need to learn how to recognize: coughing, shaking, alterations of the voice (like afonía, hoarse voice, cracked voice ...), irritation of the throat (where the larynx and the vocal cords are found), feeling of having something in the throat. If the symptoms remain, you should find out the cause by consulting the doctor and informing him or her of your professional activity.

Modifying the acoustic environment

In order to overcome ambient noise, we are required to multiply the acoustic power of our voices more than 8 times above its normal level. Measures to reduce ambient noise include:

- Reducing noise from conversations: keeping quiet in classrooms, speaking softly on the phone and using microphones....
- Improve the acoustics of the rooms. Avoiding noise sources near the workplace (for instance, printing or holding meetings or conversations in work areas).

Modifying the atmospheric environment

The environment in which we work has an effect on our vocal system. In order to ensure optimum working conditions, we should control the following aspects:

- Temperature and humidity. Keep temperature around 25° C (regulations state that it should be between 17°C and 27°C), and air moisture levels between 30% and 70%.
- Environmental pollution: common atmospheric pollutants (particles gasses such as ozone, carbon monoxide and dioxide, nitrous gasses, pollen...) should be within healthy limits; for this purpose, you should ventilate the workplace with clean air.
- Indoor pollution: Pollutants that are generated indoors, such as dust or vapors, should be avoided.



It depends on you, too

Did you know...?

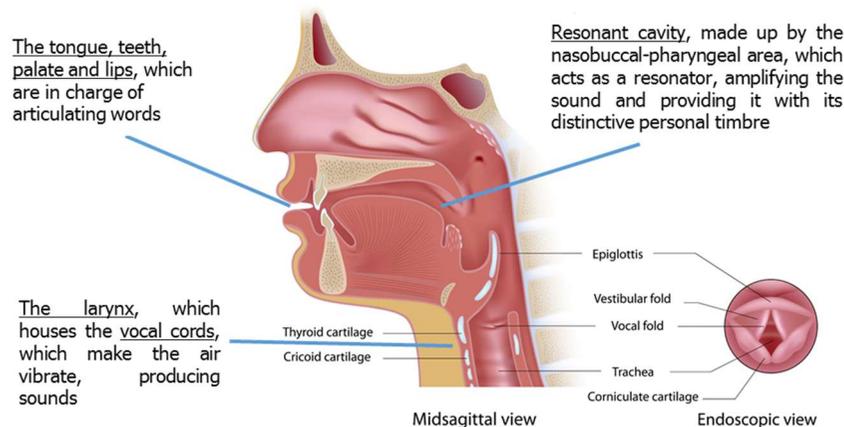
Due to repeated use, people who are required to use their voice as a part of their work may develop disorders in their vocal apparatus. These people are deemed to be professional voice users.

Some of the more common professions include:

- People whose job involves assisting others by holding conversations with them, such as: salespersons, customer service personnel, telemarketers, tour guides and others.
- People who frequently give speeches in auditoriums: public speakers, politicians, teachers and professors in all levels of education.
- People who work in show business: actors, singers.
- Other people who are required to talk throughout the day, even if it isn't out loud.

The vocal apparatus

The vocal apparatus is made up of:



That is why you must

Follow vocal hygiene guidelines

Taking care of your voice is easy. Simply apply some guidelines:

- **Hydration:** our vocal cords must be permanently lubricated in order not to become irritated or damaged when vibrating. It is therefore very important to drink water every now and then when speaking. The water you drink should not be at extreme temperatures, and it is preferable to consume water than other drinks
- **Rest.** The vocal tract requires rest. This is easier in some jobs than in others; a teacher can alternate between spoken teaching and student assignments. A telemarketer should organize his or her work in order to have regular rest periods. It is also necessary to rest the body as a whole in order to reduce tension.
- **Optimal voice use and speech training.** Learn breathing and voice projection techniques and perform exercises to improve your vocalization and word articulation.
- **Smoking.** Smoke irritates the throat and the vocal cords.
- **Substances that dry the vocal cords:** Avoid menthol and eucalyptol; marshmallows, or citrus candy are preferable. Avoid strong spirits.
- **Food that causes heartburn:** you should reduce your consumption of food that may cause heartburn, as the acid reflux can harm the vocal cords. Such foods include fried food, spicy food, alcohol and coffee.
- **Food that increase the mucus production:** avoid the abundant consumption of bananas or dairy products.
- **Health care.** You should be able to identify symptoms related to vocal abuse and contact your doctor and the Health surveillance team when alterations occur. This will allow to prevent injuries due to vocal abuse. Eat food rich in Vitamin C and avoid extreme temperatures to prevent colds.