

Myths of Vocal Health

The purpose of this quiz is to test the young vocal professional's knowledge regarding common vocal health myths. Upon completion of this quiz, the actor will be able to debunk common myths regarding the voice and its care but instead learn how to take special care of their vocal health in order to have more consistent voices and much longer careers.

1. When experiencing vocal difficulties, it is acceptable to whisper to be heard as whispering causes less abuse on the already damaged vocal system.

FALSE; Although you may think that whispering is a good way to conserve your voice, in reality whispering is actually quite taxing on the vocal folds. Most people produce a glottal whisper by placing the vocal folds in close proximity to one another, which produces a light voice. The irritated, swollen tissues continue to touch and vibrate further damaging the system. Complete vocal rest and supplementing written notes for communication is most ideal. (Boone, McFarlane, & Von Berg, 2005)

2. Excessive use of mouthwash can be detrimental to the vocal structures.

TRUE; It is important to avoid chronic use of mouthwash as mouthwash contains a high alcohol content which can be irritating to the larynx. Mouthwash should be used to rinse the mouth, but if you must gargle, switch to a mouthwash without alcohol or use warm salt water.

(http://www.gbmc.org/home_voicecenter.cfm?id=1558)

3. When my voice sounds bad, I should push harder to get it out.

FALSE; Although one can push past some mild voice difficulties, this typically results in trauma to the vocal folds themselves often due to the increased muscle tension and increased forces on the vocal tissues. The sound of your voice is often an indicator of your general health therefore if your voice is experience difficulties, voice rest and excessive hydration is most important. (Boone, McFarlane, & Von Berg, 2005)

4. Yawning lowers the voice box (larynx) and relaxes the muscles that surround the throat.

TRUE; The yawn-sign technique is one of the most effective therapy techniques for reducing tension due to vocal hyperfunction. In vocal hyperfunction, the larynx rises, the vocal folds are tightly compressed, and the throat is constricted. After yawning, the larynx drops, there is a slight opening of the vocal folds, and the throat is no longer constricted. (Zeine & Waltar, 2002)

5. Frequent throat clearing is detrimental to the voice.

TRUE; When you clear your throat you are essentially "slamming" the vocal folds together. This can cause damage to the vocal folds by causing inflammation and

irritation. If there is a need to clear the throat, try sips of water first. If this is not effective, try a silent throat clear by closing your mouth and saying the “h” sound followed by a swallow.

(Boone, McFarlane, & Von Berg, 2005)

6. What are the symptoms reported by actors with small, early-stage vocal nodules (nodes)?

Don't know

Pain, hoarseness, reduced range

Hoarseness, difficulty with register transitions, and difficulty projecting the voice
Difficulty with soft speech/stage whisper, slight breathiness/sound prior to transitions

Pain, difficulty with soft speech, and hoarseness

- These are the most common symptoms exhibited in patients with early-stage nodules. Because the nodules create additional mass on the vocal folds, the vocal folds aren't able to vibrate normally creating difficulty projecting the voice and transitioning between registers. The nodules also cause vocal fold irritation leading to the perception of hoarseness.

(Zeine & Waltar, 2002)

7. The treatment for early-stage vocal nodules is:

Don't know

Surgical removal

Complete voice rest until symptoms subside

Voice therapy focusing on changes in vocal behavior

Using a whispered voice until the vocal folds are healthy

- Usually surgical removal is not necessary on nodules unless they are large recurrent (long-established). Most early-stage nodules can be successfully treated with voice therapy. Because nodules are caused by misuse and abuse of the voice, therapy focused on changing vocal behaviors will often cause the nodules to shrink and symptoms experienced to fade away.

(Zeine & Waltar, 2002)

8. Which of the following activities, substances, and/or environments are *abusive* to the vocal mechanism? (check all that apply)

talking in loud settings

yawning

talking in a low-pitched voice

coffee

humming

throat clearing

air conditioning

(Zeine & Waltar, 2002)

9. The treatment of choice for early-stage laryngitis is:

Don't know

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Complete voice rest until symptoms subside

Voice therapy focusing on changes in vocal behavior

Using a whispered voice until the vocal cords are healthy

- Complete or absolute voice rest, which means no phonation or whispering for days, is usually enough for irritated vocal folds to lose their swelling and return to their normal shape. It is important during this time that whispering *not* occur as this still causes vocal fold movement and further irritation. (Zeine & Waltar, 2002)

10. True or False: It is better to drink cold water than warm water.

FALSE; lukewarm water is best to drink as cold water can increase muscle tension in the laryngeal area. It is also important to drink *at least* 32 ounces of water per day, however for vocal performers drinking much more is essential. Water is an actor's best friend! (<http://voicehealth101.com/voice-myths>)

11. True or False: Vocal folds are “chords.”

FALSE; “chords” is a misspelling that is often confused by many. The term “vocal cord” has been used for many years, however “vocal fold” is a more accurate anatomical description for the structure as they are folds of tissue that provide the vibratory movements needed to produce sound (<http://voicehealth101.com/voice-myths>).

12. True or False: If you experience chronic heartburn (gastroesophageal reflux), you are at risk for developing contact ulcers on the vocal folds.

TRUE; Acid reflux is highly problematic to the vocal folds. This constant acidic irritation can cause contact ulcers to form leading to vocal symptoms. If you experience frequent heartburn, contact your physician as soon as possible (Janzen & Zeine, 2008).

13. The use of NSAIDs (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs) such as aspirin and Advil can be detrimental to an actor's voice.

TRUE; The use of NSAIDs is one of the main causes of vocal fold hemorrhage. These drugs function as blood thinners and should be used **ONLY** in moderation, if absolutely necessary. (Boone, McFarlane, & Von Berg, 2005)

14. Vocal nodules are small, fibrous bumps, usually located on the middle of the vocal fold and are typically acquired over time.

TRUE; Vocal nodules are seen on both of the vocal folds located directly across from each other. They are acquired gradually due to continuous misuse and abuse of the voice. However, vocal care education to reduce the abusive behaviors exhibited by the actor can positively affect the vocal nodules, often eliminating its symptoms. (Boone, McFarlane, & Von Berg, 2005; Zeine & Waltar, 2002)

15. Emotional and physical stress does not contribute significantly to vocal problems.

FALSE; It is important to maintain good health, both physically and emotionally, as this helps preserve a healthy voice as well. It is important to exercise regularly and practice healthy eating habits.

<http://www.proprofs.com/quiz-school/user.php?login=knbrumm&view=userquizzes>

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