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Voice Disorders

Also called: Vocal disorders

Voice is the sound made by air passing from your lungs through your larynx, or voice box. In your larynx are your vocal cords, two bands of muscle that vibrate to make sound. For most of us, our voices play a big part in who we are, what we do, and how we communicate. Like fingerprints, each person's voice is unique.

Many things we do can injure our vocal cords. Talking too much, screaming, constantly clearing your throat, or smoking can make you hoarse. They can also lead to problems such as nodules, polyps, and sores on the vocal cords. Other causes of voice disorders include infections, upward movement of stomach acids into the throat, growths due to a virus, cancer, and diseases that paralyze the vocal cords.

Signs that your voice isn't healthy include:

- Your voice has become hoarse or raspy
- You've lost the ability to hit some high notes when singing
- Your voice suddenly sounds deeper
- Your throat often feels raw, achy, or strained
- It's become an effort to talk

Treatment for voice disorders varies depending on the cause. Most voice problems can be successfully treated when diagnosed early.

NIH: National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

Start Here

- Learn More about Your Voice [https://www.enthealth.org/be_ent_smart/learn-more-about-your-voice/] (American Academy of Otolaryngology--Head and Neck Surgery)
- Taking Care of Your Voice [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/taking-care-your-voice>]  (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/es/espanol/cuidando-su-voz>]
- Voice, Speech, and Language [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/voice-speech-and-language>]  (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)

Diagnosis and Tests

- Laryngoscopy (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/laryngoscopy.html>]  (Nemours Foundation)
- Laryngoscopy - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100167_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100167_1.htm]

Prevention and Risk Factors

- Keep Your Voice Sound: How to Prevent and Avoid Voice Problems [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2017/04/keep-your-voice-sound>]  (National Institutes of Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/cuide-el-sonido-de-su-voz>]
- Tips for Maintaining a Healthy Voice [https://www.enthealth.org/be_ent_smart/tips-for-maintaining-a-healthy-voice/] (American Academy of Otolaryngology--Head and Neck Surgery)

Related Issues

- Vocal Cord Dysfunction: Is it a Type of Asthma? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/asthma/expert-answers/vocal-cord-dysfunction/FAQ-20058019?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/asthma/expert-answers/vocal-cord-dysfunction/faq-20058019?p=1>]

Specifics

- Hoarseness [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hoarseness>]  (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/es/espanol/ronquera>]
- Laryngitis [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/laryngitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20374262?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Laryngospasm: What Causes It? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gerd/expert-answers/laryngospasm/FAQ-20058269?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/gerd/expert-answers/laryngospasm/faq-20058269?p=1>]
- Recurrent Respiratory Papillomatosis or Laryngeal Papillomatosis [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/recurrent-respiratory-papillomatosis>]  (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/es/espanol/papilomatosis-respiratoria-recurrente>]
- Spasmodic Dysphonia [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/spasmodic-dysphonia>] 
(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/es/espanol/disfonia-espasmodica>]
- Vocal Cord Dysfunction (VCD) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/vocal-cord-dysfunction.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/vocal-cord-dysfunction.html>]
- Vocal Cord Paralysis [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/vocal-cord-paralysis/symptoms-causes/syc-20378873?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Vocal Fold Paralysis [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/vocal-fold-paralysis>] 
(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/es/espanol/paralisis-de-las-cuerdas-vocales>]
- What are Vocal Cord Dysfunction (VCD) and Inspiratory Laryngeal Obstruction (ILO)?
[<https://www.thoracic.org/patients/patient-resources/resources/vocal-cord-dysfunction.pdf>] (American Thoracic Society) - PDF
Also in Spanish [<https://www.thoracic.org/patients/patient-resources/resources/spanish/what-is-vocal-cord-dysfunction-vcd.pdf>]

Statistics and Research

- Quick Statistics about Voice, Speech, and Language [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/statistics/quick-statistics-voice-speech-language>] 
(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Laryngeal Diseases [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Laryngeal+Diseases%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>] 
(National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Laryngitis [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Laryngitis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>] 
(National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Vocal Cord Dysfunction [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Vocal+Cord+Dysfunction%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>] 
(National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Protective Factors for Vocal Health in Teachers: The Role of Singing,... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40724085>]
- Article: Voice fatigue subtyping through individual modeling of vocal demand responses. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40670511>]
- Article: Convergent evidence for a pitch deficit in hyperfunctional voice disorders. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40622205>]
- Voice Disorders -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Voice+Disorders%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22ast+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- American Academy of Otolaryngology--Head and Neck Surgery [<https://www.entnet.org/>]
- Directory of Organizations [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/directory>]  (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)
- Find an ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat Specialist) [<https://www.enthealth.org/find-ent/>] (American Academy of Otolaryngology--Head and Neck Surgery)
- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov>] 

Children

- What's an Adam's Apple? (For Kids) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/adams-apple.html>] (Nemours Foundation)

Patient Handouts

- Hoarseness [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003054.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003054.htm>]
- Laryngeal nerve damage [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001643.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001643.htm>]
- Laryngitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001385.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001385.htm>]
- Laryngoscopy and nasolaryngoscopy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007507.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007507.htm>]
- Spasmodic dysphonia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000753.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000753.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

[Botulinum toxin injection - larynx](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007637.htm) [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007637.htm]

[Hoarseness](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003054.htm) [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003054.htm]

[Laryngeal nerve damage](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001643.htm) [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001643.htm]

[Laryngitis](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001385.htm) [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001385.htm]

[Laryngoscopy - series](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100167_1.htm) [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100167_1.htm]

[Laryngoscopy and nasolaryngoscopy](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007507.htm) [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007507.htm]

[Spasmodic dysphonia](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000753.htm) [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000753.htm]

Related Health Topics

[Head and Neck Cancer](https://medlineplus.gov/headandneckcancer.html) [https://medlineplus.gov/headandneckcancer.html]

[Mouth Disorders](https://medlineplus.gov/mouthdisorders.html) [https://medlineplus.gov/mouthdisorders.html]

[Speech and Communication Disorders](https://medlineplus.gov/speechandcommunicationdisorders.html) [https://medlineplus.gov/speechandcommunicationdisorders.html]

[Throat Disorders](https://medlineplus.gov/throatdisorders.html) [https://medlineplus.gov/throatdisorders.html]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Voice Disorders* is the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders [https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/]

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