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Ear, Nose, and Throat Doctors Celebrate 2010 World Voice Day

Three little words will show your voice you care

Alexandria, Va. – We use our voices every day, all day—at work, with family and friends, to share our emotions and feelings. We rely on our voices to communicate and connect with everyone around us, but how often do we show our voices how much we love and appreciate all they do? In honor of World Voice Day, April 16, 2010, the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) reminds people to use three little words “I love you” and protect your voice by proactively keeping it healthy.

The theme for the 2010 celebration of World Voice Day, “Love Your Voice,” reminds us of the emotional power of the human voice and the many feelings it can elicit. It also should remind us that our own voice requires care to keep it healthy.

“World Voice Day creates the opportunity for people around the world to ‘thank you,’ ‘I love you,’ and ‘I care for you’ to our voices, which are so vital to our daily existence,” says Clark A. Rosen, MD, chair of the AAO-HNS Voice Committee. “It is Valentine’s Day for our voice!”

According to a 2009 survey by the American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS), many Americans already know some key steps to keeping their voices healthy. More than 90 percent of people polled ranked the following steps as important to vocal health: not smoking, paying attention to hoarseness in your voice, breathing appropriately, and drinking plenty of water. But translating knowing how to take care of your voice to actually doing it, often takes a loving reminder.

World Voice Day gives vocal health experts an opportunity to bring renewed awareness about vocal health to the general public and to professionals who have built careers around their voices.

As AAO-HNS celebrates the eighth year of the World Voice Day observance, ENT doctors offer a Top 10 List for ways to love your voice:

1. Embrace hydration—Moisture is good for your voice, and drinking plenty of water throughout the day is the best way to stay hydrated.
2. Kiss but don't yell—Yelling or screaming is always bad for the voice, as it puts a lot of stress on the delicate lining of your vocal cords.
3. Hug a microphone when speaking in public—When you are called upon for public speaking, particularly in a large room or outdoors, use a microphone. The amplification allows you to speak at conversational volume, yet reach the entire audience.
4. Warm up your voice by saying a few sweet nothings—Warming up the voice is not just for singers; it helps the speaking voice, too. Doing simple things like lip or tongue trills, or gliding up and down your range on different vowels will help warm up your voice.

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5. Always clear the air, but don't clear your throat—Clearing your throat is like slapping or slamming the vocal cords together. Instead of clearing your throat, take a small sip of water or swallow to quench the urge.
6. Go ahead and look hot, but never smoke—Likely the single worst thing you can do for your voice is to smoke. It causes permanent damage to the vocal cord tissues and is the number 1 risk factor for cancer of the larynx (voice box).
7. Know what you're feeling—When you are in a place with loud background noise, you don't realize how loudly you may be talking. Pay attention to how your throat feels in these situations, because it will often feel raw or irritated before you notice the vocal strain you are causing.
8. Think good breath support, not just heavy breathing—Breath flow is the power source for voice. Don't let your breath support run down before refilling your lungs and refueling your voice.
9. Be a good listener—If you hear your voice becoming hoarse when you are sick, be sure to rest it as much as possible. Pushing the voice when you have laryngitis can lead to more serious vocal problems.
10. Check it out—If your voice is persistently hoarse, be sure to seek evaluation by an otolaryngologist.

In addition to these suggestions, new learning tools created for the 2010 observance include: fact sheets, a World Voice Day podcast, a radio public service announcement, "See the Voice" video, an interactive vocal health quiz, and more.

To learn more about World Voice Day, vocal health, and other ear, nose, and throat related topics, visits www.entnet.org/worldvoiceday.

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About World Voice Day

Every year on April 16, otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons and other voice health professionals worldwide join together to recognize World Voice Day. World Voice Day encourages men and women, young and old, to assess their vocal health and take action to improve or maintain good voice habits. The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery has sponsored the U.S. observance of World Voice Day since its inception in 2002.

About the AAO-HNS

The American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (www.entnet.org), one of the oldest medical associations in the nation, represents nearly 12,000 physicians and allied health professionals who specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the ears, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. The Academy serves its members by facilitating the advancement of the science and art of medicine related to otolaryngology and by representing the specialty in governmental and socioeconomic issues. The organization's vision: "Empowering otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons to deliver the best patient care."