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Ear, Nose, and Throat Doctors Celebrate World Voice Day

We Share a Voice

Alexandria, Va. – The American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) is observing the ninth annual “World Voice Day,” an international health observance day for the human voice, on April 16, 2011. On this day the public is asked to assess voice quality and recognize that harmful speaking techniques, alcohol, and tobacco abuse can easily and irrevocably damage the voice. The long-term consequences of poor voice care can range from strained vocal cords and chronic hoarseness to deadly head and neck cancers.

The theme for the 2011 celebration of World Voice Day, “We Share a Voice,” calls attention to the important role otolaryngologists play in stemming the tide of vocal disorders.

“People do very little to take care of their voices,” said Michael M. Johns III, MD, associate professor in the department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery at Emory University School of Medicine and the director of the Emory Voice Center in Atlanta. “Everywhere you go, people are screaming over the crowd at the bar, talking way too loudly into their mobile phone in a crowded area or while they’re driving down the road, or yelling at their kids. What that means is that people are not recognizing that there are limits to what their voices can do and that there is damage they can do to their vocal cords if they don’t take care of them,” he said.

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 the AAO-HNS celebrates the ninth year of World Voice Day observance, ENT doctors offer a few simple vocal health tips:

1. **Keep yourself hydrated** — Moisture is good for your voice, and drinking plenty of water throughout the day is the best way to stay hydrated.
2. **Don’t smoke** — 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 one risk factor for cancer of the larynx (voice box).
3. **Don’t scream or shout** — Use a microphone if you need to project your voice - Yelling or screaming is always bad for the voice, as it puts a lot of stress on the delicate lining of your vocal cords.
4. **Rest your voice if you have laryngitis**
5. **Get evaluated by an otolaryngologist (ear, nose and throat physician) if you have persistent hoarseness** — If your voice is persistently hoarse; be sure to seek evaluation by an otolaryngologist.
6. **Warm up your voice** — 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.
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.



In addition to these suggestions, learning tools created for the 2011 observance include: fact sheets, a brochure on Voice Disorders and the Workplace, a World Voice Day podcast, a radio public service announcement, an interactive vocal health quiz, and more.

To learn more about World Voice Day, vocal health, and other ear, nose, and throat-related topics, visit <http://www.entnet.org/HealthInformation/worldVoiceDay.cfm>.

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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."