

Referral to speech and language therapy for help establishing a stronger voice

Information and advice for patients

Speech and Language Therapy

You have been referred to the Speech and Language Therapy Department for advice and therapy to help you establish and maintain a stronger voice.

There are over 27 pairs of muscles that all work together to help you achieve a good voice. As well as the muscles in your throat, tongue and neck, the muscles in your shoulders, chest and face are also important. If you do not use your voice often, like any other part of your body, it will feel weak, shaky and may 'give out' on you occasionally.

Your first appointment

You will be invited to attend an initial appointment where the speech and language therapist will assess your voice, discuss possible causes of the problems you are experiencing and, if appropriate, recommend a course of voice therapy.

Before you receive your appointment

You will be sent a letter with an appointment to see a Speech and Language Therapist, but in the meantime here is some general advice that may help to improve your voice:

- If you are a smoker, stop smoking. Smoking will dry out your throat and can lead to more serious problems.
- Try to use your voice everyday. Prolonged periods of not using your voice will result in stiffened muscles so try to keep your vocal muscles warmed up and flexible. For example, read aloud from a newspaper or book for 2-3 minutes twice a day; make a few telephone calls, hum to yourself for 1-2 minutes several times a day.
- When speaking don't rush, take your time and pause to breathe whenever you need to.
- Avoid speaking against background noise such as from the TV, radio or traffic.
- Make sure people can see your face when talking.
- Make sure you have people's attention before you start to speak.
- If you are talking to someone with a hearing aid make sure they are wearing it and it is switched on.
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water/squash a day. This will help "lubricate" the voice box.

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Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Speech and Language Therapy Department on:

0121 507 4475

Monday – Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm

Outside of these hours, or if no one is available to take your call, you can leave a message on the answerphone.

Further information

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites www.swbh.nhs.uk and www.swbhengage.com or follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and Facebook www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs.

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- Harris et al, 'Voice clinic handbook', 1998
- Green and Mathieson, 'The voice and its disorders', June 2001
- The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, Clinical guidelines, 2005

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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