

Maintaining your voice

Auctioneers and sports announcers have to fill a room with their voice. Singers like Taylor Swift and Bruce Springsteen belt on stage for three-plus hours. How can they – and you – keep the voice strong and avoid hoarseness or worse, such as a voice disorder?

Some voice issues are unavoidable, but experts like Ashley Brim, a speech language pathologist at OSF HealthCare, want you to have the full picture. She says there are everyday tips to keep your speech mighty.

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle through diet, exercise and keeping up with doctor appointments. Brim says this reduces your risk of a stroke, which can lead to a voice disorder. It can also prevent everyday illness and coughing.

“If someone has had the flu or COVID and they’ve had a consistent cough, it can cause trauma to the vocal cords,” Brim explains. “The vocal cords are closing so rapidly with each cough.”

Using a humidifier and taking lozenges without menthol can help with that pesky cough, Brim adds.

- Aim for 40 to 60 ounces of water per day.

“That’s very helpful in maintaining a healthy environment for your vocal cords. It makes sure they’re not getting too strained,” Brim says.

- Watch your caffeine. High amounts can strain your vocal cords, Brim says.

“Do you really need that second latte at noon?” she asks with a smirk.

- Don’t yell all the time. Obvious, right? But it’s tricky if you use your voice for a living.

“Maybe you have a job like an auctioneer or a teacher trying to yell over a group of students. You have to make your voice louder [for your job],” Brim says.

“Try to focus on more projection. And take vocal rests,” she adds. “Take 10 minutes to let your vocal cords reset. Drink water. Try to decrease the trauma to the vocal cords as much as possible.”

Learn more

Read about all the ways medical professionals help restore voices on the [OSF HealthCare website](#).