

NY Center For
Ear, Nose Throat, Sinus & Allergy, LLP

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DR. KANTU'S Essential Tips for your voice...

1. **Speaking loudly and/or frequently may lead to a voice disorder.** Recognize when your voice is tired. Consider vocal training if you have to talk or sing loudly, or speak extensively for your job. Vocal endurance, like athletics, requires special skills.
2. **Hoarseness or breathiness may signal a voice disorder.** If either symptom persist for more than one week, consult your otolaryngologist.
3. **Stress can lead to forceful voice production, resulting in possible tissue damage.** Relaxation techniques can improve your voice and allow you to speak more effectively. Try stretching shoulder, neck and facial muscles periodically; slow deep breaths may also help.
4. **Caffeine and alcohol dehydrate your vocal cords.** Drink plenty of water to combat their drying effects. For example, for every mug of coffee you ingest, drink at least one 8-oz. glass of water.
5. **Some medications lead to dehydration of the vocal cords.** Antihistamines, taken for colds or allergies, shrink swollen membranes and reduce saliva and mucous production. These medications can dry the vocal tissues. If you are taking medications that dehydrate, drink lots of water and other fluids. Try to keep home and working environments at a relative humidity of 40 percent or more. A humidifier is useful to keep in the bedroom.
6. **Repeatedly clearing the throat or coughing may damage vocal cords.** Sipping water, or sucking on a cough drop may ease the irritation in the throat.
7. **Frequent heartburn and a sour taste in the back of the mouth indicate that stomach acids are spilling over into your larynx, which may lead to voice problems.** If you experience these symptoms, avoid high-acid foods and late-night eating. Consult your otolaryngologist and elevate your head with extra pillows or raise the head of the bed.
8. **Smoking is the leading cause of laryngeal cancer.** In addition, smoking irritates tissues and hampers the throat's ability to clear infections. Don't smoke!