

Vocal Hygiene Tips: For Mothers of Infants and Toddlers

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Received: June 16, 2021

Published: August 01, 2021

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It gives me immense pleasure to write this guest editorial for this upcoming July issue of the Otorhinolaryngology journal.

Being a speech-language pathologist and a first-time mom of a 7-month-old baby makes me relate my professional knowledge to my personal experiences.

As a speech-language pathologist, I know the importance of parent-child interaction and the importance of taking care of our voice. I like to interact with my child in all possible ways. So, I change my intonation patterns, mimic voices, and sing in various pitches. When I continued doing this for a very long time, I felt slight pain and discomfort in my voice. Then, I understood that I have been overusing my voice, forgetting the importance of vocal hygiene. This feeling made me think about creating awareness in mothers of infants and toddlers about vocal hygiene. Of course, vocal hygiene is equally important as compared to parent-child interaction.

Here are the few vocal hygiene tips to be followed to protect our beautiful voices:

- **Keep yourself hydrated:** Drinking 2 litres of water every day is essential to maintain optimal vocal hygiene.
- **Take voice rests:** Maintain silence whenever possible. Like your body, your voice also requires a resting period.
- **Maintain good breath support:** Do breathing exercises regularly. Take adequate breaths before and while speaking.
- **Do not overuse your voice:** Talk in comfortable loudness and pitch. Do not scream or continue talking at the same level when you feel discomfort. Do not talk continuously for longer durations.
- **Do not clear your throat often:** Clearing your throat often can cause physical damage to your vocal cords, thereby resulting in voice problems.

- **Avoid caffeine, aerated drinks, and alcohol:** Limit the consumption of caffeine, aerated drinks, and alcohol as they lead to dehydration, which can affect your vocal hygiene.
- **Avoid smoking:** Smoking can irritate your vocal cords and affect your voice majorly when done regularly. It can also cause other adverse effects. So, avoid smoking.
- **Maintain a healthy diet:** Maintain a healthy diet by avoiding spicy and oily food items. These food items can cause acid reflux which can irritate and damage the vocal cords.

Give equal importance to parent-child interaction, as well as vocal hygiene. Follow these simple tips and enjoy your parenthood without losing your beautiful voice. Happy parenting!

Volume 3 Issue 9 September 2021

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