

## PATIENT INFORMATION

# Vocal Hydration

Keeping the vocal folds moist is very important for good vocal health. We can provide moisture to the vocal folds both from the inside (internally) and from the outside (externally).

Good hydration makes the mucus that covers the vocal folds thin and slippery, so that they move against each other easily and vibrate smoothly. Think of the mucus coating as being like motor oil in the engine of your car: if it is thin and slippery, the engine runs smoothly; if it is thick and sticky, the engine doesn't run well and can get clogged up. When dehydrated, this mucus can become thick and irritating. Thick mucus is more difficult to swallow away and coughing does not remove it.

### Internal Hydration

To keep the vocal folds moist from the inside, make sure that you drink plenty of water. The vocal folds move best when the body is well-hydrated, and well-hydrated vocal folds may be less likely to get hurt from voice use.

Dry environments also dry out your throat. If you know that you are going to be in a dry place (like a dry building or an airplane), drink lots of water to keep your body hydrated.

*Working with you, for you*



**Drink at least 1.5 litres of water per day!**

## What if I don't like water?

- Try flavouring water with fruit or with sugar-free cordial.
- Drink caffeine-free tea/ coffee.
- Sometimes changing the temperature of the water makes it more enjoyable to drink.
- Foods that have a lot of water in them can help with hydration, i.e. cucumbers, melon, grapes, and jelly.



*Steam Cup  
Inhaler*

## External Hydration

External hydration is getting moisture to the vocal folds from the outside. Liquid swallowed does not touch the vocal cords, but water vapor does.

## Steam Inhalation

Inhaling or breathing steam helps the voice box stay moist and can be very soothing to irritated vocal folds. Breathe the steam through your nose for three to five minutes, **eight to ten times per day**. You can try any of these methods:

- Inhale the steam from a cup of your favorite caffeine free hot drink/ cup of boiling water.
- Breathing shower steam when having a shower.
- Run hot water into a sink or basin and inhale the steam.
- Use a steam cup inhaler.

## Room Humidification

You can increase the moisture in your home or office by using a room humidifier or even by putting a large bowl of water beside a heat source.

For more information contact your named Speech and Language Therapist.

Tel: 01803 654 948

Email: [tsdft.voicetherapy@nhs.net](mailto:tsdft.voicetherapy@nhs.net)

---

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.