UNC VOICE CENTER

What is Voice Therapy?

Voice disorders may be managed in several different ways, including: medical management (further testing and medications), surgery, and voice therapy. Surgery is usually considered when voice therapy will not help the particular voice disorder, or when improvement via voice therapy plateaus. Often, a combination of these treatments may be necessary. **Voice therapy** is a patient-centered method of treatment aimed at modifying specific behaviors that contribute to voice disorders or voice misuse, or that in some way limit the functional, daily use of your voice.

Voice therapy has several components:
- ❖ Applying principles of vocal hygiene to your daily voice use, such as reducing environmental and behavioral factors that may damage your voice.
- ❖ Practicing therapeutic exercises designed to change the way your vocal folds vibrate, such as: postural adjustments, training in breathing techniques, specific neck and throat relaxation exercises, or muscle training exercises that improve the efficiency and output of your vocal system.
- ❖ Developing vocal awareness training, called auditory training, to help you develop the ability to differentiate between your new and your old voice.
- ❖ Practicing your new voice in everyday speech to help integrate your new voice into your daily life.

Who is a candidate?

Most of us depend on our voices to make a living. We often take our voices for granted until they give us a problem. Individuals whose livelihood is dependent upon having an optimal voice are often called "professional voice users." Although we think of professional singers and actors as the elite voice users, laryngitis associated with allergies, an upper respiratory infection or vocal abuse can put a teacher, salesperson, minister, police officer, secretary, lawyer, insurance agent, among others, out of commission.

How many therapy appointments will I need?

Usually, your physician and voice therapist will initially recommend that you return one time per week for approximately two to three weeks. This initial stage of therapy will focus on changing muscle patterns and establishing positive voice behaviors. Following the initial phase of therapy, your therapist may

recommend less frequent appointments over a period of 2-3 months, depending upon your needs and schedule. Voice therapy is very individualized and follow-up care is tailored to meet your individual voice needs.

What is my role in voice therapy?

Your role in the voice therapy process is very important. Voice therapy, like physical therapy or any other behavioral treatment approach aimed at changing the way in which muscles are used, can be successful when there is commitment to the therapy process. It is important that you understand and follow the recommended voice therapy program until the desired results are achieved. Independent daily practice outside of the therapy setting is required in order to integrate these positive changes into your daily life. *Therapy is not a "quick fix."* It takes time to change muscle patterns, muscle memory and your vocal behaviors.

For Further Information or Scheduling

Call 919-490-3716, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You may ask for Jessica

Will my insurance cover voice therapy?

Speech pathology services can be grouped into two main categories: services concerned with diagnosis or evaluation, and therapeutic services.

Coverage for speech pathology services through private insurance companies varies and is dependent upon the specifics terms of your individual policy. If you have questions regarding coverage, please contact one of our financial counselor for speech at (919) 843-2955 or (919) 843-1751.

The **UNC Voice Center's** team of professionals is dedicated to providing you with the best possible care. Please feel free to ask questions or request information so that we may assist you in the rehabilitation process.

Voice Therapists:
Elizabeth Ramsey, MS, CCC/SLP
Heather Davis, MA, SLP

Otolaryngologists:
Robert A. Buckmire, MD
Rupali Shah, MD
Mark C. Weissler, MD, FACS