

# How to look after your voice

**Some children can have husky voices or even lose their voice at times.**

There can be many reasons for this including:

- medical ones, such as frequent coughs and colds and asthma
- over use of the voice
- loud talking or shouting lots of throat clearing
- having a dry mouth and throat. Mouth breathing, or things that irritate our throats, can cause this to happen

Children are usually referred to Speech and Language Therapy by ENT (Ear Nose and Throat). ENT will check if there is a physical reason for the voice problem. If you have concerns your GP can arrange a referral to ENT.

## ***How to look after our voices***

To help your child look after and protect their voice encourage them to use “good talking”.

This can include:

- giving your voice a rest. Aim for 10 minutes for every two hours of talking
- talking at a moderate volume and avoiding whispering. Whispering can be very drying for your throat and can also make it tense
- avoiding shouting and screaming as this can damage and hurt our voice
- making sure you drink plenty of water throughout the day
- avoiding caffeinated drinks, such as cola, as they dehydrate you and your voice

“Good talking” can be a challenge when it is a young child who has a voice problem. Younger children can find it difficult to understand the need for change, or how to do it. To help them achieve “good talking” more of the time:

- it is often best to show and model what to do. For example, if they are shouting you can speak calmly at a normal volume
- sit together being quiet. You could start for 30 seconds to begin with and make it a game
- decide on a sign for quieter talking rather than telling them all the time. This might be a finger to lips or a hand going down

A Speech and Language Therapist will be able to give you more ideas. They will also help to find out what your child, in particular, needs.