It’s OK to be a server and be in a garage band, an *a cappella* group, and a show, right?

- Factors in how much impact stress is generated in the vocal folds
  - How you use your voice
  - Dehydration
  - Genetics

Well, geez! I need to do it all ’cause it makes me a more flexible and marketable performer, right?

- Injuries to the vocal folds due to repetitive use or trauma
  - Nodules – hard calluses
  - Polyps – water blisters
  - Edema (swelling) – fluid retention in the vocal folds
  - Hemorrhage (bruise) – a burst vessel in the vocal folds

Um, my voice feels funny. Should I sing today?

- Common warning signs
  - Lowering of speaking or preferred singing pitch
  - Loss of higher range
  - Laryngeal pain
  - Hoarseness
  - Breathiness or airiness
  - Delayed onset of phonation
  - General vocal fatigue (voice getting tired faster)

I had three cups of coffee and am taking an antihistamine for my allergies. That can’t affect my singing, can it?

- Drying Agents (diuretics)
  - Alcohol
  - Caffeine
  - Some medications
  - Antihistamines
  - Antidepressants or antianxiety drugs
  - Blood pressure medications
  - **What to do:**
    - Hydrate! Your pee should be pale or clear
    - Inhale steam
    - Avoid alcohol and caffeine
    - With every serving of either, equal that serving with water
    - Use antihistamines and other diuretic medications only as needed and increase hydration

- Acid Reflux
  - Gastroesophogeal reflux disease (GERD)
  - Laryngopharyngeal reflux disorder (LPRD) – Symptoms include:
    - Hoarseness
    - Excessive mucus in the morning
    - Dry cough
    - Sharp, burning pain at the larynx level
    - A sensation of a lump in the throat
    - Belching
    - Particularly bad breath or a bitter taste in the throat upon waking
    - Longer time to warm up
    - Loss of upper range
What to avoid:
- Eating large amounts at once
- Eating spicy foods, fried foods, and acidic foods
- Wearing clothing with tight waist bands
- Eating within 3 or 4 hours of lying down (elevate head)
- Sleeping on your belly
- Exercising right after eating
- Drinking caffeine and alcohol

- Postnasal Drip
  - Mucus drips down the back of throat and arrives at or near the vocal folds
  - Mucus can become dry and thick with lack of hydration
  - What to do:
    - Regularly use nasal saline spray to thin out the mucous
    - Invest in a humidifier for particularly dry environments
    - Inhale steam

On the first full day of my Summer Stock contract, we moved set pieces in the old theatre, cleaned up the dressing rooms, had a three-hour music rehearsal, and finished the day with a bonfire. Can that have something to do with why my voice sounds funny?

- Whatever you inhale passes directly by your vocal folds
  - Smoke
  - Dry environment
  - Chemical fumes
  - Dust, mold, and other allergens
  - Some forms of inhalers
  - What to do:
    - Avoid smoke and, of course, smoking anything
    - Humidify a dry environment
    - Wear a mask when around chemical fumes and allergens
    - Use a “spacer” with inhalers

Yesterday, I had Showcase run, a music rehearsal for Spring Awakening for two hours, and then went to a big party at my friend’s sorority house. I’ve done that before but my voice is not happy today. Why?

- Some detrimental physical behaviors
  - Excessive talking or singing without breaks
  - Talking over ambient noise
  - Shouting and/or strained screaming
  - Coughing
  - Clearing the throat
  - What to do:
    - Make sure you are giving your voice a rest between use
    - Speak with clear diction and at a slightly higher pitch to carry your voice over the din
    - If you must raise your voice, ensure you have a deep, full breath to energize your voice
    - Avoid coughing or reduce it with suppressants
    - Instead of grinding your folds to clear the mucus, tap your folds, swallow, or exhale forcefully

RESOURCES
The majority of the information shared here comes directly from this wonderful book. It saved my voice!

CLINICS
Cincinnati – ProVoice Center: (http://www.provoicecenter.com/)
Lexington – University of Kentucky Professional Voice Clinic: (http://ukhealthcare.uky.edu/ENT/professional/)
Birmingham – University of Alabama Voice Center (www.uab.edu/medicine/otolaryngology/)
National Center for Voice and Speech (http://www.ncvs.org/)

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