**Voice Health Through Vocal Hygiene – Not Just for Performing Artists**

Voice health as a part of good health is not just for voice professionals. Just as hygiene plays a key role in general health issues and the prevention of diseases, vocal hygiene plays a key role in voice preservation and the prevention of voice disorders.

**Components of Vocal Hygiene**

Components of vocal hygiene are:

* Healthy diet and lifestyle
* Voice warm-ups before use
* Voice training on proper technique to meet voice demands
* Voice exercise to improve endurance and power
* Proper voice use and avoidance of voice misuse and overuse

**Remembering Steps for Vocal Hygiene**

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| **V** | Value your voice through healthy diet and lifestyle. |
| **O** | Optimize your voice with vocal warm-ups before use. |
| **I** | Invest in your voice with training in proper voice technique. |
| **C** | Cherish your voice by avoiding voice misuse, overuse, and abuse. |
| **E** | Exercise your voice to increase endurance and power |

**Larynx:** The larynx is the portion of the breathing, or respiratory, tract containing the vocal cords which produce vocal sound. It is located between the pharynx and the trachea. The larynx, also called the voice box, is a 2-inch-long, tube-shaped organ in the neck.

We use the larynx when we breathe, talk, or swallow. Its outer wall of cartilage forms the area of the front of the neck referred to as the "Adams apple."

The vocal cords, two bands of muscle, form a "V" inside the larynx.

Each time we inhale (breathe in), air goes into our nose or mouth, then through the larynx, down the trachea, and into our lungs. When we exhale (breathe out), the air goes the other way. When we breathe, the vocal cords are relaxed, and air moves through the space between them without making any sound.

When we talk, the vocal cords tighten up and move closer together. Air from the lungs is forced between them and makes them vibrate, producing the sound of our voice. The tongue, lips, and teeth form this sound into words.

The esophagus, a tube that carries food from the mouth to the stomach, is just behind the trachea and the larynx. The openings of the esophagus and the larynx are very close together in the throat. When we swallow, a flap called the epiglottis moves down over the larynx to keep food out of the windpipe.