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Teaching Kids to Sing
Chapter 8: The Healthy Voice
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Summary

- I. Larynx-has three main functions
 - A. It is the origin of phonation for both speaking and singing
 - B. It is a passageway for breathing
 - C. It is an aid in keeping food and liquid from passing into the lungs by closing the epiglottis
 - D. The larynx begins to grow rapidly when children begin to mature into adulthood
 - E. Young girls' larynx grow laterally while boys' larynx grow more front to back, causing their larynx to protrude at the front of the neck
 - F. The boys' larynx grows thicker and longer, which results in the voice sounding an octave lower after the change
- II. Cartilages-three major cartilages in the larynx
 - A. Thyroid
 - B. Cricoid
 - C. Arytenoid
 - D. The one bone of the larynx is the hyoid
- III. Vocal folds
 - A. Each person has two vocal folds
 - B. These are located in the larynx, and stretch from the arytenoid cartilages in the back to the front of the larynx, where they are joined at the thyroid notch
 - C. They produce sound when they are stretched and tension is put on them. The farther they stretch, the more the tension, creating a higher pitch, and vice versa.
 - D. These produce sound when air is forced between them, and causes them to vibrate.
 - E. The vocal folds are open for normal breathing.
 - F. The vocal folds are long and thin for high pitches and short and thick for low pitches.
- IV. Trachea
 - A. The Adam's apple is called the thyroid notch.
- V. Voice Disorders
 - A. Symptoms
 - i. Pain or cramping in the throat or larynx
 - ii. Excessive throat clearing
 - iii. Laryngitis or loss of voice
 - iv. Breaks in phonation
 - v. Vocal quality reflecting hoarseness, huskiness, breathing, or harshness

- vi. Incorrect speaking pitch is usually too low
 - B. The vocal folds usually become irritated and swell when they are slammed and rubbed together and the mucosa (the wet surface of the vocal folds) becomes dry as a result of drug, alcohol, or tobacco use.
 - C. Persistent vocal abuse can result in permanent damage to the vocal folds or may need correction through voice therapy or surgery.
- VI. Vocal Problems
- A. Contact ulcer-ulcerations or sore spots caused by the forceful slamming together of the vocal folds
 - B. Polyps-benign lesions of the vocal folds caused by irritants such as smoke
 - C. Vocal nodules or nodes-callus-type growths caused by excessive rubbing of the vocal folds, resulting in too much air passage between the folds and a breathy voice quality
- VII. Ten ways to protect the vocal folds and maintain a healthy voice
- A. Eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of water
 - B. Avoid irritants such as drugs, alcohol, and tobacco
 - C. Get plenty of rest
 - D. Avoid harsh and excessive throat clearing
 - E. Avoid yelling and screaming
 - F. Avoid loud or prolonged talking
 - G. Speak on the correct pitch for your voice
 - H. Support vocal production with the breath
 - I. Sing in the proper vocal register(s)
 - J. See a doctor if vocal problems persist
- VIII. Four ways to handle occasional hoarseness, sore throat, or laryngitis
- A. Rest the voice
 - B. Inhale steam for five minutes every three to four hours
 - C. Avoid aspirin-based medications
 - D. Use glycerin-based lozenges
- IX. Singing with a cold or allergy is acceptable as long as the infection or irritation has not spread to the vocal folds.

Discussion

This chapter was very short and to the point, but had a lot of information about the healthy voice. Seeing some of these disorders and problems first hand, and experiencing them, I now understand what is happening to my vocal process when these things are happening. I enjoyed how the author talked about the problems that could be experienced and faced by singers and their teachers, and how they can solve those problems, and protect from those. The vocal folds and muscles that help create the sound we make when we sing is intriguing to me, and I feel that my students should be aware when I am teaching. I feel that students will understand more if they are told what is actually happening to their vocal folds when they yell, scream, or sing in the wrong way, rather than be told just simply do not do that. I truly understand now why my teachers did not want me to do these things when I was younger, but didn't understand then. When I am a teacher, I will make my students aware of what harm they can place on their voices if they aren't

taking care of themselves, and in turn will help them become better vocalists. I feel that many teachers do not know of these dangers in the classroom, especially with younger, developing singers. Many young boys speak and sing too low, therefore, are putting stress on their vocal folds and harming them. These boys need to be taught at an early age what harm this can do and that in time they will be able to sing and speak lower and better if they keep their voices healthy.