

Caring for Your Voice



Communication and swallowing difficulties can have a negative impact on a person's confidence when he/she is socialising and participating in daily activities. The Speech Therapy department provides assessment, diagnosis, and therapy services for inpatients and outpatients with speech, language, voice and swallowing disorders.

Your voice is a powerful representation of yourself. Every day, we use our voice to communicate our ideas and emotions, impress, socialise, work and make transactions. However, when it is used persistently in the wrong way, our voice can be damaged and impact negatively on our quality of life.

Dysphonia is the medical term for any form of voice disorders. Causes of dysphonia include misuse, overuse, and unhealthy dietary and lifestyle habits. Medical-related problems include laryngitis and cancer of the voice box.

How can speech therapy help?

Voice disorders are often caused by poor voice habits. During speech therapy, a speech therapist will first try to identify any habits contributing to the disorder through observation and a brief interview. The initial assessment includes taking various voice measures to assess the extent of the disorder. The speech therapist may ask the person to read a passage or say a vowel for as long as they can into a microphone linked to a computer programme to analyse voice quality.

After the initial assessment, the speech therapist will then make recommendations on how the person can improve his/her voice. Such recommendations include:

- Better vocal hygiene (tailored for each person's unique situation).
- Exercises that would encourage a more effective way of speaking (e.g. exercises to promote diaphragmatic breathing).
- Exercises to promote vocal fold healing.
- Understanding and speaking a language may be impaired to different levels in the same person.



Did you know?

- Whispering is bad for your throat.
- We have two sets of vocal folds: true and false vocal folds. Only true vocal folds should be used in normal voicing.
- Singing or overusing your voice when you have a sore throat can damage your vocal folds seriously.

How to care for your voice

- Avoid excessive throat clearing, hard coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid shouting and abusive voicing behaviours – reduce background noise whenever possible.
- Do not use your voice in an unnatural way or whisper.
- Drink plenty of water unless you have been advised not to. Aim for two litres a day.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Give your voice time to rest in the day.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle and stress level.
- Pay attention to how your voice “feels”.
- Rest your voice when your body is sick.
- Seek medical attention if your voice problem persists for more than two weeks.
- Use a microphone when necessary.



Do you have a voice problem?

Answer these questions to find out.

- Are you prone to nasal allergies?
- Do you clear your throat frequently?
- Do you experience frequent hoarseness/loss of voice?
- Do you experience reflux?
- Do you find it hard to be understood?
- Do you have difficulty being heard over background noise or in a noisy environment?
- Are you in a job that requires you to talk a lot or be on the telephone a lot?
- Do you notice your throat feels tired by the end of the day?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you are at risk of experiencing dysphonia.



For more information

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General enquiries: 6716 2000 Fax: 6716 5500

www.juronghealth.com.sg

Clinical and appointment line hours (closed on Sundays and public holidays)

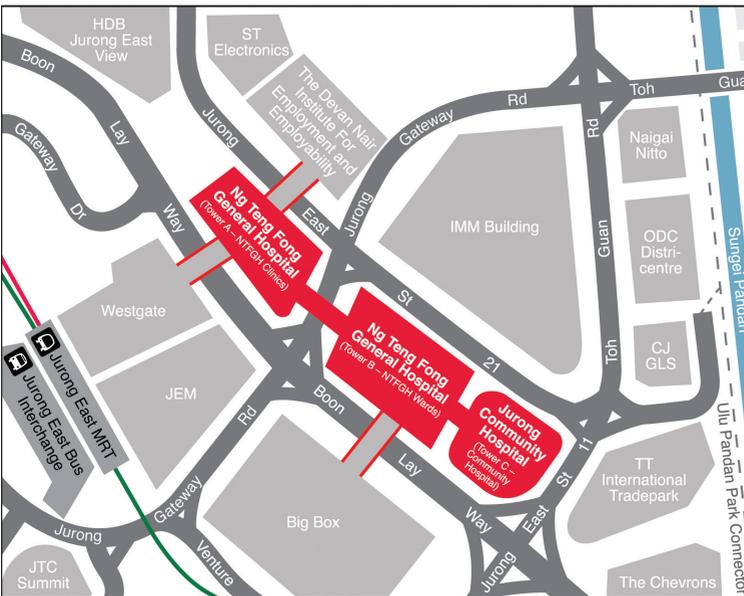
For appointments, please call 6716 2222

Monday - Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm, Saturday 8.00am - 12.30pm

For dental appointments, please call 6716 2233

Monday - Thursday 8.00am - 5.30pm, Friday 8.00am - 5.00pm

Getting there



By train

Jurong East MRT Station

By bus

From Jurong East Bus Interchange

SBS 51, 52, 66, 78, 79, 97, 97e, 98, 98M, 105, 143, 143M,

160, 183, 197, 333, 334, 335, 506

Along Boon Lay Way

SBS 99, Private bus service 625

Disclaimer:

The information in this brochure is meant for educational purposes and should not be used as substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek your doctor's advice before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition.