



### **Tips for Vocal Care for when you are feeling unwell.**

**Rest your voice** - Remember that your voice is produced by an instrument made of muscle and soft tissue and like any other part of your body that is under pressure, unwell or over exerted, rest is an important part of caring for it.

**Rest your body** - Your vocal instrument is housed in your body. If your body is under strain, your voice will be affected by the strain.

**Stay Hydrated** - Water, teas, juices all help. When you drink it helps twice. When you swallow the fluids go down your throat to your stomach (not to the vocal folds). The swallowing motion can help release muscle tension. Then it takes up to 2 hours for the fluids you drink to move through the body and affect the vocal folds.

**Avoid things that will dry our your vocal folds** - certain drinks, foods and activities irritate the delicate skin on the vocal folds. Especially avoid high amounts of caffeine, alcohol and cigarettes.

**Don't whisper or shout**- extremism of the vocal range can be harmful at the best of times. Imagine whispering is like exposing sensitive skin to a harsh, cold wind or shouting like trying to run on a sprained ankle. If you are feeling sore, speak quietly and ask your vocal coach for some good excises for stretching the vocal folds.

**Steam or use a humidifier** - Steaming and humidifiers help the function of the mucosal membranes in the sinus and throat.

**Breathe through your nose** - your nose contains turbinates that moisten and warm the air so that it is less harsh on the throat (and vocal folds) than if you breath through your mouth, where the air would be cold and dry.

**Avoid or limit the use of medications that will dry out the vocal folds** - The vocal folds are made up of a number of layers, including mucosal layers. When the vocal folds layers are dehydrated they are less bouncy and so are prone to swelling and irritation, even from normal use. Many medications can have a dehydrating effect, such as some cold and flu medications and menthol. Check with a doctor for the best alternatives.

**Avoid foods that can cause reflux** - Some foods, such as spicy foods, can cause acid reflux where the stomach acid can flow up and irritate or burn the vocal folds.