

MEDIA RELEASE

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CASLPA Celebrates World Voice Day



On April 16, the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA) is celebrating World Voice Day. The theme for the 2011 celebration, “We Share a Voice”, is to remind people of the value and significance of vocal health in everyday life.

Speech-language pathologists focus on prevention, identification, assessment, treatment and (re)habilitation of communication disorders in children and adults. Speech-language pathologists also provide education and counseling services for people experiencing communication difficulties. They work closely with other professionals, sometimes as part of a multidisciplinary team, in providing a coordinated program of care.

“Most people take their voice for granted until a problem develops. In women, the vocal folds vibrate approximately 200 cycles per second (Hz) during speech (in men, about 100 Hz, in children, about 300 Hz). In order to stay flexible and work properly, the vocal folds need to be well hydrated, relatively relaxed, and the sound needs to be audible to the speaker, who modifies his/her voice during speech based on acoustic feedback. We live in a very noisy world, and often people cannot hear themselves well as they speak, so they tense their throat and breathing muscles. We stand on a busy street corner yelling into our cell phones, or singing with the radio as we are driving in our noisy cars in traffic without thinking about the strain we are putting on our vocal folds. We sing with the radio as we are driving in our noisy cars in traffic...” states Speech-Language Pathologist Dr. Linda Rammage, Director, Provincial Voice Care Resource Program, Vancouver, BC.

Causes of vocal problems may include upper respiratory infections, inflammation caused by acid reflux, vocal misuse and abuse, vocal nodules or laryngeal papillomatosis (growths), laryngeal cancer, neuromuscular diseases (such as spasmodic dysphonia or vocal cord paralysis), and psychogenic conditions due to psychological trauma. Most voice problems are reversible and can be successfully treated when diagnosed early.

“Common symptoms of voice problems are chronic or intermittent hoarseness or voice breaks; dry, irritated sensation in the throat, usually exacerbated by voice use; chronic throat-clearing or cough; a sensation of effort in the throat during speech or singing; and running out of air while speaking or singing. Singers often notice a deterioration in the voice quality and a reduction in their vocal range, or difficulty singing through vocal register changes.” says Dr. Rammage.

If you or someone you know has a communication problem or limitation, CASLPA recommends contacting a speech-language pathologist or audiologist. CASLPA represents the professional needs for more than 5,800 speech and hearing professionals. For more information about the role these professionals play in the management of communication disorders or to find a speech-language pathologist or audiologist in your area, visit CASLPA’s website at www.speechandhearing.ca.

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