



Phonatory Phacts

The official newsletter of the Duke Voice Care Center

Duke Voice Care Center

"Where everyone has a voice"

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"Where Everyone Has a Voice"

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Welcome to the Duke Voice Care Center!

by David Witsell, MD, MHS and Seth Cohen, MD, MPH

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Special Points of Interest:

- Learn about the history of the DVCC
- Get tips on how to take care of your voice
- Hear about our research activity
- Find out about services the DVCC offers
- New Office Laser Vocal Cord Surgery Offered at DVCC
- Upcoming 2010 World Voice Day Celebration April 10

Who would you be without your voice? How would you communicate your thoughts and feelings, project authority and confidence or soothe your frightened child? Your voice has a profound effect on the way others see you, and voice problems can hinder both your personal and

holiday season and every day drives us to seek clinical excellence, best solutions and innovative approaches to voice disorders.

Duke Voice Care Center is dedicated to preserving and restoring voice for everyone.

to treat voice problems. Education about voice health is also a key part of our treatment program.

At DVCC, we provide voice care for everyone: vocal performers at all levels--from opera and pop singers to those who sing in their church choir, teachers, clergy and others who rely heavily on their voice in their occupations, patients with neurologically based voice disorders such as spasmodic dysphonia or vocal fold paralysis, and those with medically complex voice problems



Duke Voice Care Center Team

professional life.

Unfortunately, voice disorders often go undiagnosed or people think they are irreversible, leaving friends, family and colleagues with a great sense of loss and defeat. Most voice problems are complex, but can be improved or even resolved by appropriate evaluation and management. The joy of improving your voice in this

The Duke Voice Care Center (DVCC), within the Duke Division of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, is designated as a Center of Excellence at Duke University Medical Center. Our multi-disciplinary team approach to comprehensive voice care is patient oriented and combines medical, surgical, functional and behavioral recommendations

such as throat cancer and tracheal stenosis. We are committed to you through the science and art of voice care.

In this first issue of "Phonatory Phacts", we wish you health and happiness in this holiday season. We wish you the joy of singing with friends and family, and we recommit ourselves to working to bring you the best vocal

Tips for a Good Voice This Holiday Season by Hilary Caso, CCC/SLP

The holidays are a time of celebration, when we invite the opportunity to connect with others and indulge in the delights of the season. Because of this our voices become vulnerable to the pitfalls of these indulgences. Heed these

tips to have a holly, jolly voice during this holiday season:

1. Stay hydrated! If you will consume more caffeine and alcohol this season, balance these with water (Rule of thumb: add one serving of water for each

serving of alcohol/caffeine).

2. Don't compete to be heard! When chatting with family and friends, move the conversation to a more remote location and away from music and ambient



Speaking of Research by Seth Cohen, MD, MPH

Our Duke Voice Care team has been active in research this year. As the elderly population continues to increase and remain active, we recognize the potential communication difficulties that may arise due to age-related voice changes. Therefore, we have published and presented at national meetings about the impact of dysphonia (hoarseness) in the elderly and its association with dysphagia



(swallowing difficulty). This work has received the interest of the lay press with articles on abcnews.com. Recent publications have also noted that hearing loss may be a risk factor for dysphonia among the elderly. Additionally, to advance the care and screening of patients with voice problems, understanding the impact of dysphonia in the primary care population is essential. We have presented research on this topic at the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. Articles about our research have been reported online by U.S.

News & World Report. Current projects include further refinements of the Singing Voice Handicap Index with the publication of the Singing



World Voice Day 2008 audience enjoys guest speaker NC Symphony Director, Grant Llewellyn (Photo courtesy Marc Banka Photography)

Performing Voice Programs and Services by Leda Scarce, Singing Voice Specialist

At DVCC we realize that whether you are a professional or avocational performer, the voice can represent your source of artistic expression and livelihood, and also your personal identity and self-image. We know that, in the demanding world of performance, vocal performers can often experience vocal difficulties that require the immediate and skillful attention of medical professionals who have knowledge and expertise in caring for the performing voice.

Our Performing Voice Specialist works with the other members of our

"Performers learn to maximize vocal efficiency for speaking and singing, develop good vocal hygiene habits and optimize vocal pacing."

team to evaluate the performer's vocal demands, singing style, vocal technique, upcoming performance needs and performance environments,

and designs a vocal exercise regimen that is tailored to each performer's injury, singing style and level of experience. Performers learn to maximize vocal efficiency for speaking and singing, develop good vocal hygiene habits and optimize vocal pacing.

We also provide baseline vocal health examinations and offer classes and workshops on prevention of voice injuries for performers who want to ensure that



The DVCC Offers a Team Approach by Gina Vess, MA, CCC-SLP

The DVCC recognizes that anyone can develop a voice problem, whether it is from overuse or from medical conditions, whether our voice is important for our job or for speaking with friends and family. When our voice is compromised, we have difficulty being heard and understood by those around us.

We often hear, "I guess I'll just live with this voice." Many people are not aware of the ways we can improve the

voice. People often believe that surgery will be the primary recommendation, which is typically not true. The DVCC believes one of the most important aspects of voice care is understanding each person's unique needs.

We have a variety of voice treatment options depending on each person's goal. A thorough evaluation is completed by the doctor and speech pathologist to determine the causes

and treatment options for you. If you just want to have a medical



Patient receives DVCC consultation (Photo courtesy Marc Banka Photography)

For Many Patients, Persistence Pays Off by Caroline Banka, CCC/SLP

Persistence pays off for voice patients. After more than 20 years of hoarseness, a 64 year old gentleman came in to Duke Voice Care Center this summer to see what our voice experts could do to improve his voice. Surgery to his thyroid gland over 20 years ago had left him with a paralysis of his left vocal fold, a weak voice and difficulty swallowing. Ten years later, he underwent a voice surgery which gave him a stronger voice and more normal swallowing (both surgeries were at an outside hospital). But over the years, his voice became worse. He was unable to project his voice, and it was very high

pitched. On the phone he was often mistaken for a woman, and he was constantly asked, "What did you say?" A normal day of talking was tiring, and talking at social gatherings was exhausting. He also got strangled drinking liquids. Fed up with this situation, he came to Duke Voice Care Center looking for help.

Dr. David Witsell recommended voice surgery again, and the patient eagerly agreed to getting a new implant in the left vocal fold. After the surgery, he no longer choked on liquids. In addition, he reported, "My voice is 200% better! I

feel like a different person." He was surprised and delighted that he had regained his deep speaking pitch, and sounded like a man for the first time in years. In just one session of voice therapy (a little bit like mastering the controls

".....My voice is 200% better! I feel like a different person....."

on a new car), he was used to his normal pitch and his new-found ability to be as loud as he needed to be. It is always satisfying to help a patient get their voice back, but especially when the problem has been long-standing. It is never too late to explore options for

In-office laser laryngeal surgery

The Duke Voice Care Center is excited to announce a new service for patients. We have begun performing office-based laryngeal laser surgery. This is an exciting treatment modality that allows us to treat patients with specific vascular vocal cord lesions and in the office under topical anesthesia instead of traditional surgery in the operating room with general anesthesia.



DVCC's 2009 World Voice Day celebration provided guests with an abundance of educational material (Photo courtesy Marc Banka Photography)

Laryngologist and Performer Dr. Pat Kenan Cofounds Duke Voice Care Center

The DVCC's philosophy, administrative foundation and vision of the future of voice care originates in the work of a dynamic and ambitious physician and performer, Patrick D. Kenan, MD. Dr. Kenan believed that understanding and caring for the performing artist—those whose vocal skills must be exemplary—clinical insight into the prevention and treatment of voice problems could be gained and applied to those patients who have voice problems arising from daily life.

During his 40 years as an otolaryngologist at Duke University Medical Center, Dr. Kenan was the nexus for voice



Dr. Pat Kenan performs with DVCC Speech Pathologist, Caroline Banka (Photo courtesy Marc Banka Photography)

care and the performing arts. Of all that Dr. Kenan did and saw and influenced, his greatest interest was in laryngology, or the health and care of the voice. His love of the performing arts was expressed through his lifetime commitment to the arts and through his love of people and the experience of life.

The vision for the Duke Voice Care Center is Dr. Kenan's vision, and therefore an extension of his teachings and life. We are honored to memorialize Dr. Kenan in continuing to pursue the care he delivered, the education he provided and the care and advocacy for performing artists he believed in.



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Duke Voice Care Center
Duke University Medical Center
Division of Otolaryngology-
Head and Neck Surgery
Box 3805
Durham, North Carolina, 27710

Information: 919-681-4984
Appointments: 1-800-385-3646
Or 919-684-3834

Locations:
Durham: 200 Trent Drive
Raleigh: 3480 Wake Forest Road

We're on the web!
www.dukevoicecare.org



The Duke Voice Care Center offers services at its location at 3480 Wake Forest Road in Raleigh.

2010 World Voice Day Update!

World Voice Day is an international day of recognition and celebration of the human voice, sponsored by The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery since 2002. Duke Voice Care Center has led North Carolina's observance of World Voice Day for the past three years.

Our **World Voice Day Celebration 2010** will be held on Saturday, April 10 from 12:00-5:00 PM at the Renaissance Raleigh Hotel at North Hills, and will include a plethora of information on how the voice works and how to keep it healthy, question and answer opportunities, classes and workshops, panel discussions with **WRAL Anchor David Crabtree** and a performance by international jazz vocalist and recording artist **Nnenna Freelon**.

For schedule and registration information for this **FREE** event call 919-681-4984.



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