

Singer's FAQ

I have outlined several frequently asked questions that might be of interest to those of you browsing through my website:

Can I sing when I have a cold?

Yes, usually you can sing when you have mild upper respiratory symptoms such as a runny or stuffy nose, mild scratchiness in the throat. You should drink lots of fluids to stay hydrated and be sure to get plenty of sleep to give you the energy to make it through your performances. Be aware of the effects of cold medicines that might give you relief, but also dry your vocal cords.

What you have to watch out for are the signs of hoarseness. They are a pressed-sounding, husky, abnormally pitched voice; either super low from tiredness and lack of hydration, or higher as when one has swelling of the vocal cords. Under these circumstances, you should probably not sing until you have an ok from your doctor.

When you shouldn't sing:

- 1) When you experience hoarseness that causes your voice to "blank out" occasionally, or become uncontrollably breathy.
- 2) Pain when vocalizing, especially pain that occurs behind your Adam's apple.
- 3) Abdominal pain might be a sign of serious condition, and even mild abdominal pain can impede good breath support.
- 4) Any time your doctor says you should be on vocal rest. Your voice reflects the state of your physical and mental health. If your voice is impaired, then you should look not only at the immediate causes of your problem, but your overall attitude toward your health.

Why does my voice feel so sluggish when I'm having my period?

During menstruation, fluids aren't only retained in your lower abdomen, your vocal cords can retain fluids too, making your voice resistant to light quick movements and adjustments in length needed for singing a wide range. Many women complain of a slight to moderate loss of high range during their periods. This is temporary and if care is taken to insure overall health, your voice should be more responsive and flexible as your water retention subsides.

Why is drinking water so important for my voice?

Your vocal cords vibrate against one another when you speak and sing. Water passes through your entire system to hydrate your vocal cords to make them slippery in order to glide rather than create excessive friction when they vibrate. Remember that water doesn't go directly to your cords. If it did, you'd choke because this is your body's way of protecting your lungs from any food or liquid from entering your lungs. You have to keep the water level in your entire body high enough to affect your vocal cords. This is why it is important to keep yourself hydrated well in advance of performances.

Why should I take voice lessons if I want to sing rock music?

Rock music requires high, loud singing for long periods of time. The average voice isn't built to take that kind of abuse for any period of time. Training your voice can help you identify excessive tension in the production of sound. By eliminating that excessive tension, you might find your voice lasts longer and sounds better. You will also need to develop the control to sing with good intonation. Developing an awareness of healthy tone production and developing better control are just two of the many advantages of studying singing.