

Taking Care of Your Voice

It is very important to take care of your voice. Here are some simple steps for good “voice hygiene.”

- 1.** Drink plenty of water or other liquids each day (non-caffeine and non-alcoholic).
- 2.** Do not try to shout over noise when you talk.
- 3.** Rest your voice when it is tired.
- 4.** Reduce throat clearing or coughing. Use a hard swallow or soft sound instead.
- 5.** Reduce or eliminate heart burn.
- 6.** If the air is dry in your home, use a humidifier.

Tips for Friends and Family

Family and friends are often the best support system for people with PD. There are several things they can do to help their friend or loved one communicate more effectively.

The first and most important thing is to encourage your friend or family member to consider speech therapy when changes in voice and speech are noticed. A speech-language pathologist can develop a home exercise program tailored to his or her needs. The following tips and strategies are also helpful:

- ☐ Look at one another when talking. The element of lip reading can help you understand more of the conversation.
- ☐ Reduce background noise. Turn off the radio and TV, close car windows or shut doors to noisy areas.
- ☐ Be aware that people with PD may not show facial expressions because of rigid facial muscles. Don't assume that your friend or family member does not understand your message. Don't depend on facial expression to decide if the message was “transmitted.”
- ☐ Use shorter sentences and encourage your friend or family member to do the same. Ask questions that can be answered in a short sentence or with a “yes” or “no.”
- ☐ Be patient. Allow ample time for the person with PD to communicate. Don't rush or force responses.
- ☐ Make sure that everyone's hearing is as good as possible. While PD does not cause hearing loss, it is more common as people age. If you or a carepartner suspect hearing loss, a hearing aid may help. Ask your physician about an evaluation.

