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The University of Texas  
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# Introducing the Texas Voice Performance Institute

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## WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL VOICE USER?

When most people think of Professional Voice Users, one thing comes to mind — a Broadway star or touring musical act. At the Texas Voice Performance Institute, we have a broader definition of the term.

Singers and actors certainly have a special set of demands placed on them. The need to project as well as the endurance required to complete the tasks of these professions far exceed what most of us ever face. Often they will need to perform despite laryngeal injuries and need precise techniques when surgery is required. You can trust your voice to Dr. Alexander's trained hands and be confident that

we can work with your unique situation to restore you to better vocal health.

Then there are those of you who depend on your voice more than you realize but have never been trained on how to produce and protect it. This group includes teachers (at all educational levels), lawyers, sales professionals and stay-at-home parents. If your job function depends on a clear and articulate voice, you are a kind of Professional Voice User and you, too, deserve the special care you need.

Your voice is your signature and we want to help you keep it recognizable.

## SHOULD I SEE A DOCTOR ABOUT MY VOICE?

While we all can experience voice changes when we have a cold or the flu, there are certain warning signs that should trigger a visit with a health professional. Dr Alexander is available to help you if you show any of these signs.

Most voice changes that happen with a cold resolve within 2 weeks. If your voice is still not sounding normal after this period of time, you

should consider being evaluated. There may be more than just the swelling that is expected in the setting of an upper respiratory infection.

An increase in the amount of work it takes to produce your voice or having extra air escaping (breathiness) can be signs of weakness within one or more vocal cords. It should never be painful to talk. This can

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be a sign of abnormal growths in the voice box and should always be investigated by a physician.

If your voice is shaky or you have problems starting certain words, you may be helped by having a Laryngologist examine your throat and vocal function. Dr. Alexander completed a fellowship that trained her to look for signs of Neurologic

## WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AT MY OFFICE VISIT?

When you arrive for your consultation with Dr. Alexander, you will be greeted by our friendly desk staff. Once some basic paperwork is completed, you will be escorted into the patient care area where our nursing staff will measure your blood pressure and other vital statistics. You will then be seated in an individual examination room.

Dr. Alexander will then greet you personally and ask you questions about your voice problem as well as your general health and habits. She will then perform a thorough examination of your ears, nose and throat. Finally, since the voice cannot be examined from the outside, she will then perform an endoscopy to examine your voice.

We can perform this endoscopy with cameras that are inserted either through the mouth or nose to give a view of the inside of the throat.

Don't worry — you will be given numbing medicine if you need it to minimize the discomfort

problems that can affect your voice

Finally, if you have noticed unintentional weight loss or difficulty swallowing along with your voice problems, please call for an urgent evaluation as these can be signs of serious conditions that need to be treated quickly.

from these procedures. You will be asked to perform various vocal tasks while the camera is in place so that we can thoroughly examine your larynx.

Dr. Alexander will then review the video of your examination with you and explain any important findings relevant to your complaint. A treatment plan will be outlined and any medications recommended will be explained to you. This is a good time to ask any questions that may have formed in your mind. She may ask you to consult with other professionals at our center, such as Speech Pathologists, Neurologists or Gastroenterologists, if it is needed to optimize your care.

We take pride in providing you with Professional care that fits your needs and our highest priority is having you return to your daily routine in the best vocal health possible.

