

## WHAT ARE VOCAL NODULES?

Vocal nodules develop on the edges of the vocal cords, and are caused from vocal abuse. They usually occur on both sides of the vocal folds at the point where the vocal folds receive the most contact during speech.

Nodules start as small swellings; children's nodules are generally softer than adult's nodules, and they will usually go away if the child stops yelling or otherwise abusing his/her voice. If vocal abuse continues, the soft nodules can gradually become fibrous or scar, similar to calluses on the palms of someone who uses their hands at work a lot. The voice then becomes breathy and hoarse and will remain so until the nodules dissolve with voice therapy and rest or until they are removed surgically.

Surgery is used as a last resort because it could potentially cause lasting damage to the vocal cords. Even with surgical removal, the individual must still go through voice therapy, because the nodules could develop again. It is rare to have to remove vocal nodules surgically from a child's vocal cords.

A stressful, nervous person is more prone to have vocal nodules because the tension in his/her neck muscles causes a hostile closure of the vocal cords. By changing the habits that led to the vocal abuse and taking a course of voice therapy, the nodules should disappear. The goal is to teach the person to avoid behaviors that might encourage the formation of nodules.