**Important Vocal Care Tips**

Water:

* It takes water 4 hours to reach your vocal cords. If you are dehydrated, your vocals may not receive any hydration at all. Aim to stay hydrated at all time.
* Spring water is your best friend- any brand of spring water will do. Spring water will make mineral deposits on your vocal cords to help during the hydration process.
* Room temperature water is the best to have on hand before and during times of singing.

Food:

* Avoid dairy, sugar, caffeine and citrus at least 12 hours before singing. If at all possible, make it 24 hours out. (avoid ice-cream, milk, coffee, orange juice, cakes, cookies, cheese, spicy foods, etc.)
* Dairy and sugar coats your vocal cords and creates mucus/ coating on your vocals which makes hard to control.
* Caffeine and citrus tighten your vocal cords which can cause scratchy and rough vocals.
* Eat as much protein as possible before singing. Eat meats (for the meat eater) or beans, or even scrambled (without cheese) or boiled eggs at least 1-2 hours before singing. Protein is important because it provides you with energy to sing. When you are singing properly, you use your entire body- this uses energy! If you are lacking energy, you’re going to use methods that are unhealthy for your voice.

Vocal Rest:

* Vocal rest is a time where you are not singing or talking. Sleeping does not count because some of us may snore or talk in your sleep. I recommend at least 30 minutes a day for vocal rest.
* Resting your vocals, gives your body a chance to “reset”. It is a form of healing for your vocals- especially if you are hydrated.

Warm Ups:

* YES, they are important. Your vocal cords are like muscles. If you don’t “stretch” warmup first, you can cause permanent vocal damage. You catch cramps in your legs if you run without stretching, the same would happen to your vocals without warming up. Warming up enables your voice to perform/produce at a stronger level and without you straining your voice to hit notes you weren’t ready for.
* There are millions of vocal exercises, as long as you hit your tops, mids, and lows- you are truly warmed up.
* When warming up, start soft and low, and work your way to a full voice. You can also think of your vocals as a car engine in the wintertime- the heat doesn’t kick in right away, the cold air is still sitting in the car, the engine pulls and tugs, the car makes noises... Every day your voice starts at a winter effected level- warm it up!