



## **PREVENTION OF HEARING IMPAIRMENT**

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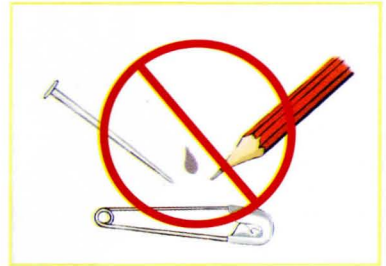
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## **PREVENTION OF HEARING IMPAIRMENT**

Hearing is an important sense for communication. A major part of all learning takes place through hearing. Therefore, a reduction in a person's ability to hear can severely affect his/her life. Hearing loss can be caused by several factors- some which occur even prior to birth, and some which cause hearing loss to set in later. Hearing loss may even be hereditary. But in several cases, hearing loss can be prevented. Here are a few guidelines on how you can protect your hearing:

### **Do not use sharp objects to clean your ears.**

Using pins, pencils, needles and other pointed objects to clean your ear can easily damage the wall of the ear canal, or even the ear drum. This would lead to hearing loss. Wax generally comes out of the ear naturally. If there is any impacted / hard wax or excessive wax secretion, get your ears cleaned by an ENT doctor.



### **Do not insert any objects into the ear canal**

Children may insert seeds, grains, pebbles, soil, etc, into the ear canal during play. In case of adults, insects are the most commonly found foreign bodies. Get help from an ENT doctor immediately. Foreign bodies may block the ear drum or damage the ear drum, causing a mild to moderate hearing loss. Do not pour water into the ear, as it may cause infections.



### **Do not neglect earaches or ear discharge.**

Ear infections, if not treated, can cause hearing loss. Consult your ENT doctor immediately if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Ear pain
- Fluid in the ear
- Itching sensation
- Ringing in the ear



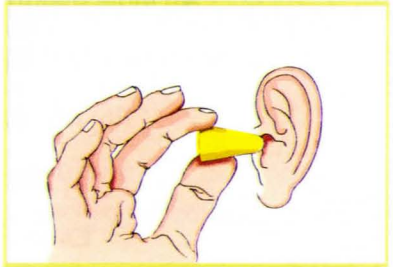
## **Wear a helmet**

Avoid injuries to your head and ears. Road Traffic Accidents may damage hearing. Any injuries to the head may also cause hearing loss. Wear a helmet to protect yourself from road traffic accidents.



## **Avoid noise.**

Be aware of sources of noise. Exposure to loud and excessive noise is one of the most common causes of hearing loss. Protect your ears from the sounds of gunfire, firecrackers, very loud music, etc. If your job requires you to work in a noisy situation (saw-mills, road construction, printing works, factories, etc.), make sure you wear hearing protective devices such as ear muffs or ear plugs, in order to protect your hearing. Your audiologist will be able to help you select an appropriate hearing protective device.



## **Do not take medicines indiscriminately.**

Certain antibiotics (like streptomycin, kanamycin, and gentamycin) and aspirin may cause hearing loss. If you have to take any of these drugs for a prolonged duration, have your hearing evaluated periodically. If you think your hearing is being affected, talk to your doctor. Check if the dosage can be lowered, or if you can take an alternate medicine.



## **Discourage marriage between close relatives.**

Consanguineous marriages, or marriages among blood relatives, increase the chances of children being born with hearing loss.

## Take good care of health during pregnancy.

Infections such as measles, mumps, syphilis, and rubella during pregnancy may damage the unborn child's hearing. Exposure to radiation / X-rays, drug intake during pregnancy, falls and injuries can also affect the child's hearing. Pregnant women should meet their doctors regularly for advice on diet, general health and vaccines. This is needed to protect the unborn child from all health problems, including hearing loss. Rh-incompatibility can also affect the child's hearing. This condition occurs if the mother's blood group is -ve and the child's blood group is +ve (for example, if the mother's blood group is B- and the child's blood group is B+).



## Prevent ear infection.

While feeding your baby, hold him/her in a slanting position. This can prevent the baby from having ear infections. Do not pour hot oil or any other liquids into the ear, as it may result in pain and ear discharge. If you swim or dive, use ear plugs to keep the water from entering your ears. Dirty water in the ear might cause infections, too. While blowing your nose, do so gently and from both nostrils. Otherwise, fluids from the nose may be forced into the middle part of the ear, thus causing infections.



## Get immunizations done on time.

Diseases like mumps, measles, rubella, encephalitis, meningitis, typhoid, etc. may affect hearing. As far as possible, prevent these diseases and get children vaccinated on time. If you get these diseases, you must get advice from a qualified audiologist.





### **Get your hearing checked periodically.**

Keep in touch with your audiologist.

Get your hearing checked immediately if you find it difficult to hear, or if you feel one ear is better than the other. Also consult the audiologist in case of

- any discomfort,
- ringing in the ear
- dizziness
- family history of hearing loss



If you come across the following signs and symptoms of hearing loss, consult an audiologist/ENT doctor immediately:

- Unclear speech and other sounds
- Difficulty understanding words, especially when there is background noise or in a crowd
- Asking others to speak more slowly, clearly and loudly
- High volume of the television or radio is required
- Not active in conversations
- Avoiding people
- Ringing sounds (tinnitus) in the ears

Even otherwise, get your hearing checked periodically, to ensure that your hearing sensitivity is normal.

**REMEMBER, PREVENTION IS ALWAYS BETTER THAN CURE!**

If you have any questions/comments, or need any help, feel free to contact us:

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