

Protect Your Ear from Noise

by Audiology 20

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PROTECT YOUR EARS FROM NOISE



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PROTECT YOUR EARS FROM NOISE

What is noise?

Noise is a pollutant, and it is known to be dangerous to health. Some of the effects of noise on physical well-being are:

- Damage to important parts of the ear
- Ringing in the ear (tinnitus)
- Heart problems
- Fast breathing
- Stomach ulcers
- Increase in cholesterol
- Affects unborn babies

Noise also has several psychological effects such as annoyance, poor concentration, irritation, short temper, inefficiency at work. Difficulty in sleeping and emotional problems.

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Noise and hearing loss

Exposure to noise is one of the leading causes of hearing loss. Hearing loss is caused due to excessive or prolonged exposure to noise and is acquired gradually. In some cases, when only one ear is affected, the problem is not detected unless a hearing test is done.



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Listening to loud music for a long time can also cause hearing loss. Excessive use of iPods, MP3 players, etc at loud levels damages hearing. If you use earphones or headphones, remember to keep the volume low. If a person three feet away from you can hear the music, it means the music is dangerously loud.

Musicians, who rehearse and play music for several hours a day, are also at risk for hearing loss. They are exposed to several hours of loud music, and many of them also hold their musical instruments close to their ears. Like any other loud sound, music can also damage a person's hearing. Music-induced hearing loss results in an inability to perceive differences in pitch, decreased hearing sensitivity at high frequencies, and tinnitus (ringing in the ears). Musicians as well as those who listen to music at high levels need to protect their hearing using special hearing protective devices.

Noise affects the delicate parts of the ear, which transmit sound to the brain. The amount of damage to one's hearing caused by noise depends on loudness & duration of noise exposure.

Beware of these signs if you have been exposed to noise:

- 1 You need people to talk more loudly
- You can't hear someone more than two feet away from you.
- Speech around you sounds unclear or low after you leave a noisy area.
- You have temporary pain or ringing in your ears (tinnitus) after exposure to noise.
- Understanding speech in the presence of noise becomes difficult.

Common sources of noise:

- Traffic noise
- Machinery noise / Factory sirens
- Carpentry and construction
- Flour mills
- Loud music or rock music or stereo headsets
- Wedding halls and parties
- 2 Video games / gaming arcades
- Some movie theaters, home entertainment centers, car stereo systems, health clubs, clubs, and amusement centers.
- Mixers / Grinders
- Noisy toys



Noise control:

Noise can be controlled at three levels:

- **At the place where noise is generated:** Noise can be reduced at its origin. For example,
 - Industrial equipment could be designed and maintained such that the amount of noise generated is less.
 - Firecrackers, toys and video games can be manufactured such that the noise output is not dangerously high.
 - The volume of music can be reduced.
- **In the path:**
 - In factories and offices, walls can be built in a special way so that they absorb the noise.
 - In houses, carpets, cushions and curtains can be used to absorb noise
 - Trees and plants are also quite useful in this regard.
- **At the receiver:**
 - The individual can simply walk away from the source of noise if possible.
 - Otherwise, he/she should use hearing protective devices like ear plugs and ear muffs, or, in cases of extreme noise, both.

What can I do to protect my hearing?

Prevention is the best method to tackle hearing loss. Though it is impossible to eliminate noise, we can try to minimize its effects as much as possible by:

- Wear Hearing Protective Devices (HPDs) such as earmuffs, ear plugs, your audiologist can help you choose the option that is most suitable for you. They can also give you more details regarding the pricing and availability of HPDs.



- Turn the volume down of your television, audio & Personal stereo system.
- Do not honk your horn, use it only when needed.
- Avoid particularly noisy firecrackers, don't let them off too late at night, burn in open areas.
- If you are exposed to continuous and loud noise, take a break from listening. Move away from the sound source for a while.



Get your hearing checked regularly



While it may not be possible to reverse hearing loss, early identification of the problem can help in the prevention of further damage. Get your hearing evaluated periodically. This is especially important if you are at risk for hearing loss.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, feel free to contact us at:

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