



Hearing Protection

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Loud Noise is Dangerous to Your Hearing

Loud, high-decibel noise is everywhere. In work or leisure, jackhammers, rock concerts, jet engines, leaf blowers, and the very popular mp3 players can all have an effect on your hearing. These days, employers are often conscientious regarding loud noises at work and provide hearing protection. However, the aforementioned mp3 players produce sound levels of 105-120 decibels, and sounds at or above 85 decibels may cause permanent hearing loss with prolonged exposure.

Aside from loud music, "too loud" noise can be found many places:

- Electric Drill: 95 decibels
- Ambulance Siren: 120 decibels
- Stock Car Races: 130 decibels
- Busy Game Arcades: 110 decibels
- Noisy Children's Toys: up to 135 decibels

See the Center for Hearing and Communication website at <http://chchearing.org/noise/common-environmental-noise-levels/> for a larger list of noise levels.

There are ways to protect against hearing loss. The following prevention tips are for all individuals - both young and old - to keep in mind:

1. **Get Hearing Tests:** Get periodic hearing tests from an ear, nose and throat specialist, a licensed audiologist or hearing aid dispenser.
2. **Limit the Volume of your mp3 Player:** If you cannot hear other people talking from three feet away when you are wearing headphones, the volume is too loud and could be damaging to your hearing.
3. **Check your Medications:** Be aware of the side effects of your medications which can cause temporary or permanent hearing loss. Some over-the-counter and prescription medications known to be ototoxic include antibiotics, chemotherapy drugs and anti-inflammatory drugs. Discuss your medications with your doctor or pharmacist.
4. **Limit Exposure:** Limit exposure to music concerts, stadium sports or loud equipment like lawn mowers or leaf blowers that may be damaging to your hearing. Use ear plugs whenever possible.
5. **Carry Ear Plugs:** Always carry ear plugs in your purse, car or brief case; you never know when you will find yourself in noise pollution.