

Tips to Protect Your Hearing

Teens are exposed to lots of noise, whether it's from listening to music, mowing the lawn or playing in a band. It's important to protect your hearing now so you don't have hearing loss now or as you get older. In this handout, you will learn tips to protect your hearing so you can keep doing the things you love.

WHY SHOULD I PROTECT MY HEARING NOW?

You should protect your hearing in your teen years for 2 reasons. First, protecting your hearing now lets you keep doing the things you love, like listening to music, playing sports, driving or talking with your friends. Second, it sets you up for better hearing as you get older.

WHAT IS NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS?

Teens have a high risk of developing noise-induced hearing loss. **Noise-induced hearing loss** is when you lose some of your hearing after hearing loud noises. This can be **temporary** (go away after a little while) or **permanent** (won't go away).

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS?

For some teens, there are no signs of noise-induced hearing loss other than they can't hear as well as they used to. Other signs include:

- Ringing in your ears after hearing loud noises
- A roaring sound in your ears after hearing loud noises
- Buzzing in your ears after hearing loud noises

Tell your doctor if you have any of these signs of noise-induced hearing loss. He/she can help you get the right treatment and come up with ways to help protect your ears from more hearing loss.



Did you know?

At least 1 out of every 8 teens in the United States has some form of hearing loss in 1 or both ears. This number is growing in teens, according to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MY HEARING?

- **Turn down the volume.** If you wear earbuds while listening to music, take out your earbuds and hold them 3 feet (1 meter) away from your ear. If you can hear your music from 3 feet away, it's time to turn down the volume.
- **Set your music to a safe level.** An easy way to do this is to turn your music all the way up, then back down to the halfway mark. Listening to music higher than the halfway mark can cause noise-induced hearing loss.
- **Spend less time with earbuds in.** You can still listen to your music, play games or watch shows on your device. Earbuds send noise directly into your ears and can cause hearing loss. Spending time without earbuds lets you listen while still protecting your hearing.
- **Take a break from loud noises.** This lets your ears recover from loud noises you've been listening to. It also helps ease ringing or buzzing in your ears.
- **Sit in the middle of the room at a concert.** This helps protect your hearing and you can still listen to and see your favorite artists in concert.
- **Buy noise-cancelling headphones.** These protect your ears and let you tune out extra noise when you need to focus, like when you're doing homework.
- **Bring earplugs or protective earmuffs to places with loud noises.**
- **Buy custom-molded musicians or high-decibel protection earplugs if you're in a band or work around musicians.** These might cost a little more, but they will let you keep playing and listening to your music now and as you get older.

A note for your parents...

The most important thing you can do to protect your teen's hearing is to set a good example yourself. If you mow the lawn, wear noise-cancelling headphones. When you listen to music, keep the volume low.

If you can hear your teen's music from his/her earbuds or headphones from 3 feet (1 meter) away, tell him/her to turn the volume down.

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