

Fact Sheet

A: Wave



HEARING HEALTH FOR YOUR CHILDREN

The ability to hear well plays a key role in children's lives, whether at school, with friends and family, or participating in afterschool activities like sports. But did you know that children are often surrounded by everyday noises that could damage their hearing? As a parent, you can teach your children how to protect their hearing for life by encouraging healthy hearing habits now. Just as wearing sunscreen can protect against sun damage, there are habits that youth can develop to protect against hearing damage from noises that are too loud and last too long.

What is noise-induced hearing loss?

Long or repeated exposure to loud sounds can cause hearing loss. Every day, preteens experience sounds in their environment—from personal electronic devices, television, the school cafeteria, and the hallways between classes. Normally, these sounds are at a safe level that won't damage their hearing; however, sounds can be harmful when they are too loud, even for a short time, or when they are both loud and long lasting. These sounds can damage sensitive structures in the inner ear and cause noise-induced hearing loss. Noise-induced hearing loss can be immediate, or it can take a long time to be noticed. It can be temporary or permanent, and it can affect one ear or both ears.

The louder the sound, the shorter the amount of time it takes for noise-induced hearing loss to happen. How close you are to the noise and how long you are exposed to the noise also determine how damaging a noise can be. Since noise-induced hearing loss builds over time, it might not be until the adult years that your children notice they don't hear as well as they used to.

Noise-induced hearing loss is the only kind of hearing loss that can be completely prevented. You can help your children protect their hearing by developing healthy hearing habits early in life.

How can I protect my child from noise-induced hearing loss?

- Teach your children three easy ways to protect their hearing:
 - **Lower the volume.** Turn down the sound on electronic devices.
 - **Move away from the noise.** Simply walk away.
 - **Wear hearing protectors.** Use earplugs or earmuffs if you can't leave a noisy place.
- When you can hear the music coming from your children's earbuds, remind them that high volume levels can damage their hearing.
- At home, limit the number of noise sources operating at once. The TV, computer, hair dryer, vacuum, and power tools can all contribute to a high noise level.



- Be a good role model. Use earplugs and earmuffs yourself in noisy situations:
 - When you use power tools or mow the lawn.
 - When you attend sporting events.
 - When you go to the movies.
- In noisy situations, seize the moment to discuss the importance of protecting their hearing:
 - When an ambulance goes by.
 - When you're waiting for the subway.
 - When you attend a parade.
- When you and your child find listening enjoyable, emphasize the pleasure of healthy hearing:
 - On a hike, hearing a bird singing or wind in the trees.
 - Hearing the sound of wind chimes.
 - Listening to a favorite band playing.
- Praise your child for healthy hearing choices.
- Make sure your child gets a hearing test every year.
- Keep earplugs and earmuffs handy.

Believe it or not, research shows that preteens actually do listen to their parents and model their parents' behavior. You can help your children develop healthy, life-long hearing habits.

For more suggestions, visit the Noisy Planet website at www.noisyplanet.nidcd.nih.gov.

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) sponsors ***It's a Noisy Planet. Protect Their Hearing***. This national public education campaign is designed to increase awareness among parents of children ages 8 to 12 (twins) about the causes and prevention of noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). With this information, parents and other adults can encourage children to adopt healthy hearing habits before and during the time that they develop listening, leisure, and working habits. To find out more about how to protect your hearing and that of your family, visit the Noisy Planet website at www.noisyplanet.nidcd.nih.gov.

For more information about your hearing and hearing loss, contact:

NIDCD Information Clearinghouse

1 Communication Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20892-3456

Voice: (800) 241-1044

TTY: (800) 241-1055

Fax: (301) 770-8977

E-mail: NPIInfo@nidcd.nih.gov



National Institute on
Deafness and Other
Communication Disorders

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HEARING HEALTH FOR YOUR CHILDREN

PARENTS

The ability to hear well plays a key role in children’s lives, whether at school, with friends and family, or participating in afterschool activities like sports. But did you know that children are often surrounded by everyday noises that could damage their hearing? As a parent, you can teach your children how to protect their hearing for life by encouraging healthy hearing habits now. Just as wearing sunscreen can protect against sun damage, there are habits that youth can develop to protect against hearing damage from noises that are too loud and last too long.



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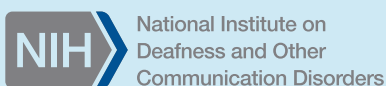
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Science of noise-induced hearing loss

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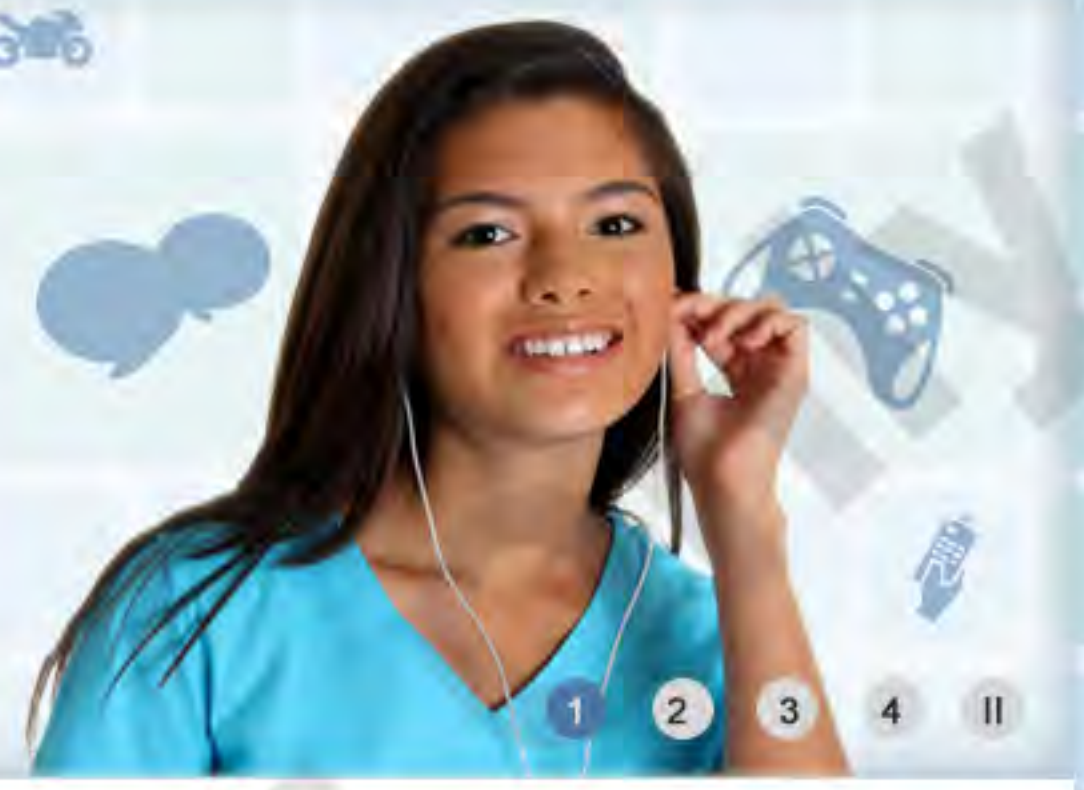
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Noisy Planet is an educational campaign to raise awareness about noise-induced hearing loss and hearing protection. The campaign is celebrating it's 5th anniversary of promoting healthy hearing habits to thousands of parents and preteens.



Kids & Preteens

Icon of two children

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