



How To Help Your Child Prevent Hearing Loss from Noise Exposure



Hearing loss due to noise exposure can begin at young ages. It is a permanent condition that occurs gradually when excessive and loud noise damages the tiny hair cells in the inner ear. Although hearing loss may be temporary after brief exposures, it can become permanent as exposure increases. Very loud noises, even for short periods, can permanently damage hearing. Of the millions of Americans with hearing loss, over one third have been affected by noise. Ears do not get used to loud noises. If you think you tolerate loud sounds better than other people, you may have hearing damage.

Noise levels are measured in decibels (dB), beginning at 0 dB for the weakest sound heard. The higher the dB level, the louder the noise. For every increase of 10 dB in sound, the noise level is actually 10 times the previous sound (for example, 60 dB is 10 times louder than 50 dB). Continued exposure to noises over 85 dB is potentially damaging to hearing, and noises over 125 dB cause pain. Some common dB levels are as follows: 30 dB for whisper; 60 dB for conversation; 70 dB for vacuum cleaners; 90 dB for lawn mowers; 94 dB for the average Walkman set on a volume level of 5 out of 10; 110 to 115 dB for the typical volume level used in personal headphones; 120 dB for jet takeoff and band practice; 120 to 150 dB for music concerts; 140 dB for firearms, air-raid sirens, and jet engines at 100 feet; and 194 for the loudest sound that can occur.

If you experience the following reactions while with your child, you will know that the noise is excessive and potentially damaging:

You cannot hear the speech of someone 2 feet away from you.

You have to raise your voice to be heard.

You have pain or ringing in your ears after noise exposure.

You experience a slight muffling of sounds.

You have difficulty understanding speech even though you can hear the words.



2nd Edit

You can help prevent hearing loss in your child if you . . .

consider the noise factor when selecting toys for your child
(examples of louder toys are electric guitars, horns,
toy phones, toys that amplify the child's voice,
vehicles with sounds, loud computer games)

limit exposure to louder toys and appliances

turn down volumes that you can control

avoid or reduce exposure to excessively loud noises

move as far away as possible from the source of the noise

monitor volume and limit use of your child's personal headset

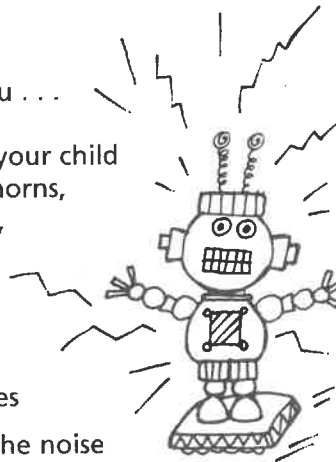
have your child wear earplugs or other hearing protection

take quiet breaks from the noisy environment

avoid exposing your child to noisy sports events and rock concerts,
or have the child wear hearing protection

educate your child about the importance of preserving hearing

be a good example by wearing ear protection and setting up a
quiet home environment



Noise-induced hearing loss is permanent, but it is preventable. Protect your
hearing; don't lose it.



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