



Noise Induced Hearing Loss Facts

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month

For over 75 years, May has been designated as Better Hearing and Speech Month, a time to raise public awareness, knowledge and understanding of the various forms of communication impairments to include those of hearing, speech, language and voice.

Helen Keller once noted that of all her impairments, she was perhaps troubled most by her lack of speech and hearing. She elaborated, that while blindness separated her from things, her lack of speech and hearing separated her from people -- the human connection of communication.

- The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders reports that approximately 43 million people in the United States suffer from a speech, voice, language or hearing impairment.
- An estimated 26 million Americans between the ages of 20 and 69 have permanent hearing loss from noise exposure.
- Preventable noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) among teens and adults is on the rise in the U.S. NIHL has increased among teens and young adults by more than 30% just within the last 15 years.
- One in five American teenagers now suffer from some type of hearing loss, an increase of 31% since the mid-'90s.
- Most cases of hearing loss are slight, affecting only one ear and involving mostly high-frequency sounds thus many teens may not even notice the hearing change.
- About one in 20 have a "mild or worsening" hearing loss, which can make them struggle to follow conversations or teachers at school.
- Instead of developing noticeable hearing problems at age 50 or 60, these teens may have trouble hearing beginning at age 40.
- Teens with "mild to moderate" hearing loss were found to have a 70% increased risk of hearing loss from the use of a portable music player, such as an iPod.

What is noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL)?

NIHL is the most common form of hearing loss today – it is permanent, painless but completely *preventable* with smart listening habits.

What are the signs of a hearing loss?

- Frequently ask people to repeat themselves
- Often turn your ear toward a sound to hear it better
- Understand people better when you wear your glasses or look directly at their faces
- Lose your place in group conversations
- Keep the volume on your radio or TV at a level that others say is too loud
- Have pain or ringing in your ears

Hearing Loss Prevention Tips

- Avoid hazardous sound environments.
- Keep the volume setting on your music player below 60% of maximum output.
- Use hearing protection devices (HPDs) – such as foam earplugs when exposed to loud noises.

What levels of sound are dangerous?

- Anything above 85dB (normal conversation is 60dB)
- Household Appliances/Lawn Mowers, Subway, Smoke Alarms 85-95 dB
- Chainsaws/Diesel Trucks/Motorcycles 100-110 dB
- Rock Concerts, Sports Stadiums 110-120 dB
- Ambulance Sirens/Firecrackers/Jet Engines/Auto Racing 120-140 dB
- Artillery Fire, Shotguns, Explosions at Close Range 160 dB +

Why is it important to Learn 2 Listen?

Hearing loss is permanent and irreversible. It is cumulative and worsens without treatment.

Visit our Partners for more information:

- The Starkey Hearing Foundation at <http://www.starkeyhearingfoundation.org/education.php>