



Hearing Loss in Children

Approximately 12% of children ages 6-19 years have noise-induced hearing loss¹

- Noise-induced hearing loss is permanent and is almost always preventable!
- Hearing loss can happen at any age. A growing number of children and teenagers are damaging their hearing by exposure to loud sounds.
- Noise-induced hearing loss is caused by damage to the hair cells found in the inner ear. Hair cells are small sensory cells that convert the sounds we hear (sound energy) into electrical signals that travel to the brain. Once damaged, our hair cells cannot grow back, which results in permanent hearing loss.

How to protect your child’s hearing:

- Have your child wear proper hearing protection (earmuffs, earplugs) when in noisy environments such as concerts, sporting events, fireworks displays, and car races. Hearing protection comes in a variety of sizes and textures to provide optimal fit. Custom-made earplugs can be obtained from an audiologist.
- Teach your child to turn down the volume. Visit www.TurnItToTheLeft.com
- Set volume limits on your child’s portable devices
- Teach your child to walk away from loud sounds

Noise-induced hearing loss can be caused by sudden or prolonged exposure to any sound over 85 dB. Sound loudness is measured in units called decibels (dB).

60 dB	Normal conversations, dishwashers
80 dB	Alarm clocks

90 dB	Hair dryers, blenders, lawnmowers
100 dB	MP3 players at full volume
110 dB	Concerts (any music genre), car racing, sporting events
120 dB	Jet planes at take off
130 dB	Ambulance, fire engine sirens
140 dB	Gun shots, fireworks, custom car stereos at full volume

Childhood noise risks include:

Noisy toys	Arcades
Sporting events	Concerts
Band class	Firearms
Motorbikes	Firecrackers
Farm equipment	Power tools
Movie theaters	MP3 players
Shop class	

Role of Audiologists

Audiologists identify, diagnose, and provide treatment options for patients with hearing loss and dizziness. They work closely with physicians, when necessary, and are an important part of the management team.

Do you think you or a family member may have a hearing loss? Click on the “Find an Audiologist” link at www.audiology.org to locate and set up an appointment with an Audiologist in your area.

¹ Niskar AS, Kieszak SM, Holmes AE, Esteban E, Rubin C, Brody DJ. Estimated prevalence of noise induced threshold shifts among children 6 to 19 years of age: the third National Health and Nutrition Survey, 1998-1994, United States. Pediatrics 2001; 108: 40-43.