



6 Easy Tips for Protecting Your Hearing



"Hearing is the sense that connects us to each other. It is important to recognize when your ears are in danger and to safeguard them so you can enjoy listening to friends, music, and sounds you love for the rest of your life."

-- William Hal Martin, Ph.D., Professor of Otolaryngology,
National University of Singapore

Walk away and plug your ears. *If a loud noise takes you by surprise, quickly plug your ears with your fingers and walk away. Increasing the distance between you and the source of the sound will help reduce the intensity of the sound reaching your ears.*

Use earplugs when you know you'll be around loud sounds. *Disposable earplugs, available at local pharmacies, are effective in blocking out dangerously loud sounds while still allowing you to hear music and conversation.*

Leave the fireworks to the professionals. *Be smart when you celebrate festivities that include fireworks. And when watching the show, stay a safe distance away—where you can enjoy the colors and lights but not be exposed to loud noises. And keep earplugs in for the entire show.*

Limit your time in noisy environments. *When you participate in noisy activities, alternate them with periods of quiet. And remember to use ear protection.*

Turn it down. *Keep smartphones and other electronics at a low volume. Limit your use of headphones and ear buds. Remember, it's not just the volume that matters. It's also the duration of time spent listening.*

Visit your local hearing healthcare professional *for custom-fitted ear protection and a hearing test to determine your baseline hearing level. If you have any hearing loss it can be addressed.*

"Whoever has an ear to hear, let him hear." -- Matthew 11:15

Noise Affects Our Hearing

We hear sound when delicate hair cells in our inner ear vibrate, creating nerve signals that the brain understands as sound. Just as we can overload an electrical circuit, we also can overload these vibrating hair cells. Loud noise damages these delicate hair cells, resulting in hearing loss and often tinnitus (ringing in the ears).

Prolonged exposure to loudness such as outdoor concerts, lawn mowers, power tools, jetskis, snowmobiles, ATV's, target shooting, sporting events and fireworks can potentially damage our ears.



The World Health Organization reports that 1 billion young people (12 to 35 year olds) are at risk of hearing loss due to damaging levels of sound at noisy entertainment venues and the unsafe use of personal audio devices. If you have to shout over the noise to be heard by someone within arm's length, the noise is in the dangerous range. Here are the warning signs:

- You have pain in your ears after leaving a noisy area.
- You hear ringing or buzzing (tinnitus) in your ears immediately after exposure to noise.
- You suddenly have difficulty understanding speech after exposure to noise; you can hear people talking but can't understand them.

For more information on hearing loss and to take the free, confidential, online hearing check from the Better Hearing Institute, visit www.BetterHearing.org.

Provided by Community of Christ Health Ministries Association
Thank you to **ENT Associates of Greater Kansas City** for
contributing their expertise for this health brief.

www.entofgkc.com