Article Side

Loud Noise Exposure and Hearing Loss by Diana Worthy

Article published on May 9th 2012 | Health

It may be expected that sudden loud noise exposure can damage hearing sensitivity. However, both the loudness of the noise and the amount of time you are exposed can pose as risk factors for noise-induced hearing impairment. Prolonged exposure of loud sounds can be just as or even more damaging than a louder sudden exposure. Sounds that are louder than 85 decibels (dB) can cause irreversible loss of hearing.

You might assume that 85 dB must be a very loud soundâ€¦like a plane taking off, but the average hair dryer may produce 80-90 dB of noise! Below is a noise chart from http://www.asha.org/public/hearing/noise/. This chart can be useful in understanding your levels of noise exposure.

Painful

150 dB = fireworks at 3 feet

140 dB = firearms, jet engine

130 dB = jackhammer

120 dB = jet plane takeoff, siren

Extremely Loud

110 dB = maximum output of some MP3 players, model airplane, chain saw

106 dB = gas lawn mower, snow blower

100 dB = hand drill, pneumatic drill

90 dB = subway, passing motorcycle

Very Loud

80â€“90 dB = blow-dryer, kitchen blender, food processor

70 dB = busy traffic, vacuum cleaner, alarm clock

Moderate

60 dB = typical conversation, dishwasher, clothes dryer

50 dB = moderate rainfall

40 dB = quiet room

Faint

30 dB = whisper, quiet library

Everyone cannot carry around equipment to determine the levels of noise around them. Consider these tips to determine if you are possibly being exposed to hearing damaging levels.

â€¢ You have to speak very loudly to be heard in conversation.

â€¢ You cannot hear someone you are speaking with unless they are within 3 feet of you.

â€¢ Sound seems muffled or strange when moving to a quieter space.

â€¢ Your ears ring, buzz, or hurt after being around the sound.

Permanent hearing loss can be incurred from these exposures. As loud sounds pass through the hearing system, damage occurs to the sensory hearing cells, called outer hair cells within the organ of hearing (cochlea). Once these cells are damaged, they cannot (with current known treatments) be repaired or restored. The only option to help this type of hearing loss is hearing aids.

You can take preventative measures! Everyday sounds may be damaging. Consider hearing protection. Ear plugs, ear muffs, or custom fit hearing protection works best. Placing your fingers or cotton in your ears may help, but is not the most effective method. Ear plugs and muffs can be found in a variety of stores, and online.

Custom ear molds can be made by a hearing healthcare specialist that will completely seal ear. Specific types of electronic hearing protection devices can also allow for clear hearing until a sudden sound (like gunfire) are exposed. Try to limit your time exposure to loud sounds. Move away from the sound or place your fingers in your ears when hearing protection is not available. If possible, turn the volume of the noise source lower. Reduce your loud noise exposure!

Article Source:
http://www.articleside.com/health-articles/loud-noise-exposure-and-hearing-loss.htm - Article Side

Diana Worthy - About Author:
Diana Worthy has been in the Hearing Health Care Industry since 1984. She began her career in a private practice and became licensed in the state of California as a Hearing Instrument Specialist. In 1990 she accepted a position at a major hearing aid manufacturer and during her time there enjoyed a variety of roles. Diana managed customer service and the patient clinic working with difficult to fit clients. She also worked in the education and training department teaching other professionals about hearing aid technology and fitting strategies. Diana decided to return to private practice doing what she loves and does best, helping people achieve a better quality of life through better hearing. a http://budurl.com/chaapril12article

Article Keywords:
Hearing Loss