

Announcement

National Protect Your Hearing Month — October 2016

October is National Protect Your Hearing Month, a time to raise awareness about the causes and prevention of noise-induced hearing loss. Noise-induced hearing loss results from sounds in the environment that are too loud and can damage sensitive structures in the inner ear, even with a brief exposure. This type of hearing loss can result from occupational noise exposures, leisure activities such as sporting events or concerts, or use of personal listening devices. Noise-induced hearing loss is permanent and cannot be reversed (1).

Noise-induced hearing loss affects persons of all ages. During 2001–2008, one in five Americans aged ≥ 12 years, an estimated 48 million persons, had hearing loss in at least one ear, and approximately one in eight (almost 30 million persons) had hearing loss in both ears (2). Nearly half of all persons aged 12–35 years in middle- and high-income countries are exposed to unsafe levels of sound from personal listening devices; approximately 40% are exposed to potentially damaging sound levels at clubs, discotheques, and bars (3).

The prevalence of hearing loss in the United States is expected to increase as the population ages (2), and the cumulative impact of hearing impairment becomes more pronounced among older adults (2,4). Untreated hearing loss is associated

with higher risks for social isolation, depression, dementia, falls with injury, and inability to work, travel, or be physically active (4). CDC and other agencies and organizations are focused on the prevention of noise-induced hearing loss, both within the work setting and other environments.

Additional Information to increase awareness about noise-induced hearing loss and promote hearing loss prevention is available at http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hearing_loss/default.html; <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise/>; and <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/index.html>.

References

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2. Lin FR, Niparko JK, Ferrucci L. Hearing loss prevalence in the United States. *Arch Intern Med* 2011;171:1851–2. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/archinternmed.2011.506>
3. World Health Organization. Hearing loss due to recreational exposure to loud sounds: a review. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2015. http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/154589/1/9789241508513_eng.pdf
4. President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. Aging, America, and hearing loss: imperative of improved hearing technologies. Washington, DC: Office of the President, President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology; 2015. https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/PCAST/pcast_hearing_tech_letterreport_final.pdf