



American Academy of Otolaryngology-
Head and Neck Surgery
www.entnet.org



NOW HEAR THIS

Protect Your Hearing Health –

Unprotected, prolonged exposure to noise above 85 -90 decibels can lead to hearing loss. You might consider using hearing protection if you are exposed to:

Decibels/Activity

100	subway train
107	lawn mower
110	baby crying
110	power saw
125	auto stereo
162	fireworks (at 3 feet)

For more information on protecting your hearing, visit: www.entnet.org.

Did You Know?

One in every ten (28 million) Americans has some form of hearing loss.

28 million adds up to more than all those suffering from heart disease, cancer, multiple sclerosis, blindness, tuberculosis, and kidney disease combined.

60% of people with hearing loss are between the ages of 21 and 65.

Among seniors, hearing loss is the third most prevalent, but treatable, disabling condition, behind arthritis and hypertension.

Hearing loss is the number one birth defect in America.

There are over 1,000 types and models of hearing aids to satisfy an individual's hearing loss needs.

May Is Better Hearing and Speech Month

Hearing Health Facts from the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery

More than 28 million Americans have some form of hearing loss, about a third of it is caused by noise. Noise damages hearing in a slow, cumulative process that most people do not recognize until it is too late. It is irreversible, but also completely preventable by using appropriate hearing protection. Hearing loss caused by noise, a type of sensorineural hearing loss, develops when the auditory nerve or hair cells in the inner ear are damaged. It affects the ability to recognize sound, to understand speech, and to hear clearly. Other things like age, medications, or trauma can lead to sensorineural hearing loss, but loud noise is a major source of such loss.

When is noise dangerous?

Unhealthy noise levels are not as loud as you might think. Sound is measured in decibels (dB). Every time sound levels increase by 6 dB, the impact of sound on the ear doubles. If noise is loud enough and lasts long enough, it can harm your hearing. You may not notice it right away, but the damage can become apparent later in life.

Generally, if you are in a situation where you need to raise your voice to be heard, if you have a ringing or buzzing in your ears, or if you have trouble hearing for a while after you leave, you should use hearing protection.

How do you protect your ears?

Just as you wear goggles to protect your eyes, you should wear hearing protection for your ears in noisy environments. Hearing protection devices—earplugs and earmuffs—decrease the amount of sound that reaches the eardrum.

Research has shown that noise-induced hearing loss is affecting younger people more than ever before. As the noise level in society has increased with rock concerts, sporting events, and electronic devices, we experience unprotected exposure to dangerous noise levels at earlier ages, leading to earlier hearing loss. Children and teens who listen to loud music or electronic games may be damaging their ears and could experience hearing loss later in life.

The ability to hear is an important part of human communication. It keeps us safe and allows us to interact effectively with others. But only 20 percent of those with hearing loss seek help. If you suspect a hearing loss, consult a physician with special training in ear care and hearing disorders (called an otolaryngologist or otologist). This doctor can diagnose your hearing problem and recommend the best way to manage it.

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EW RESEARCH:

Getting to the Bottom of Hearing Health Problems Facing Patients Today



Let's Talk about Speech!

Tongue-tie (Ankyloglossia)

Most of us think of tongue-tie as a situation we find ourselves in when we are too excited or nervous to speak. Actually, tongue-tie is the non-medical term for a relatively common physical condition that limits the use of the tongue, ankyloglossia.

Before we are born, a strong cord of tissue that guides development of mouth structures is positioned in the center of the mouth. It is called a frenulum. After birth, the lingual frenulum continues to guide the position of incoming teeth. As we grow, it recedes and thins. This frenulum is visible and easily felt if you look in the mirror under your tongue. In some children, the frenulum is especially tight or fails to recede and may cause tongue mobility problems.

The tongue is one of the most important muscles for speech and swallowing. For this reason, having tongue-tie can lead to eating or speech problems, which may be serious in some individuals. If you are concerned about a child having chronic tongue-tie, make an appointment with your local ENT doctor for a check-up.

Find your local ENT doctor through the AAO-HNS physician finder at www.entnet.org.

Otolaryngologist - head and neck surgeons (commonly known as "ENTs") are constantly striving for medical discoveries that will solve some of the pressing problems of hearing health. Each month, the American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery publishes the newest and most important research from researchers worldwide in the medical journal *Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery*. Three new studies published in the May 2008 edition reveal substantial new findings in several areas of hearing health, including research that indicates that patients with profound hearing loss benefit substantially from having cochlear implants placed in both ears, rather than one, as is the common practice.

Cochlear Implants: One or Two?

One new study, authored by researchers at Indiana University School of Medicine, is a first-of-its-kind look into cochlear implants and whether two are truly better than one. Researchers found that two implants not only substantially improve various areas of hearing and quality-of-life for recipients, but they are more cost-effective to implant than one.

"This research should lead to more opportunities for unilateral single ear cochlear implant users to receive a second implant," said Brad Bichey, MD, MPH, the study's lead author. "This should lead to improved function in a hearing world as well as improved speech perception, speech development, and communication."

BAHA: Anchors Away!

Another study discusses the safety of single-stage implantation of bone-anchored hearing aids (BAHA) in children. Currently, adults receive the implantation in one stage, while children receive the surgery in two stages. But according to a study by researchers at the Manhattan Ear, Nose, and Throat Hospital in New York City, performing the surgery in a single stage on a child is not only safe, but more efficient. Furthermore, adopting the single-stage technique provides earlier hearing recovery.

Allergic Rhinitis: The Space Between

The third study released in the journal shows that the presence of allergic rhinitis and adenoiditis are significant factors in increasing the risk of a child contracting ear infections where fluid collects in the middle ear space (otitis media with effusion) that may impact hearing.

These are just a few examples of the research being done every day by dedicated healthcare professionals striving to provide the best ear, nose, throat, head, and neck care for patients around the globe. The American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) proudly supports these efforts, and the goal of providing quality healthcare to all.

For more information on Better Hearing and Speech Month, and the AAO-HNS, visit <http://www.entnet.org>.