Avoid exposure to unsafe noise levels as much as possible.

- Remember, there is a time-intensity trade-off for levels of sound. Going to a music concert for an hour could have a trade-off of twelve hours of time-intensity, so be aware of this when making decisions that could impact your hearing. Also, when attending events such as concerts and festivals, avoid sitting near the speakers.

- Infants and young children are particularly vulnerable to noise-induced hearing loss and permanent damage. Be cautious about what sounds young children are being exposed to, including toys. Many toys on the market have sound output that can reach or even exceed 80-85 dB, some of which can cause immediate hearing damage. Early detection and prevention is crucial for young children when it comes to preserving hearing ability.

You can take steps to preserve your hearing now and prevent noise-induced hearing loss for years to come! Educate yourself on hearing and noise exposure, understand your risks and follow preventative guidelines.

Information obtained and adapted from the following sources:

Have You Heard?

Hearing Loss in Today’s Youth: The Growing Problem of Noise-Induced Hearing Loss and Ways to Prevent It
Noise-Induced Hearing Loss is a Serious Problem on the Rise

Being exposed to high levels of noise for even a small amount of time can have a serious effect on one’s hearing. This is what is known as a time-intensity trade-off, which means that even a few minutes of noise at 100 dB can be equivalent to a few hours of sound at a 75 dB level!

According to the Hearing Alliance of America, 15 percent of college graduates have hearing loss that is equal to or greater than that of their parents, due to long-term noise-induced hearing loss. As cited by the About Kids Health web site.

Prevention: Noise-induced hearing loss can be minimized and significant damage can be prevented by following some guidelines. When followed consistently, these guidelines can help you preserve a precious ability for many years to come – your ability to hear!

Prevention Tips and Guidelines:

· When using a personal music player, set the volume while in a quiet place to help you recognize what a safe volume level is without the distraction of excess noise around you.

· When setting the volume, make sure you can still hear other sounds around you. The personal music device should not be so loud that you cannot hear other people or the sound of your own voice while listening to music. This means that when you enter a noisier place such as outdoors or the gym, do not turn up the volume!

· Use better headphones. Since many headphones do not cancel out additional outside noise, this in turn often causes users to want to turn up the volume of the music device. A much better and safer option is to purchase a set of quality, noise-canceling headphones. These types of headphones cancel out the excess noise around you so that you can hear your music better, and therefore listen to it at lower volumes.

· One of the best options available for minimizing the impact of loud sound exposure is ear protection. When worn properly, ear plugs and ear muffs can reduce noise by 15 – 30 dB. Hearing protection can be extremely effective and is also a necessity for anyone working in a loud sound-exposure environment.

Know the Facts:

· It is estimated that 10 to 15 million people in the United States are affected by noise-induced hearing loss, and the number for youth is rapidly increasing.

· An estimated 12.5% of children ages 6-19 have experienced permanent hearing loss due to noise exposure.

· Sound exposure and measurement is expressed in decibels (dB). The sound pressure of something such as paper rustling or people whispering is between 20-30 dB. The sound pressure of motor vehicles for a close observer can be anywhere from 60-100 dB, and an airplane at take-off is around 120 dB.

· Exposure to noise above 85 dB is the level at which hearing loss can occur, and many personal music devices have the ability to reach at least 95 dB.

· Studies on hearing and noise exposure have found that youth typically listen to personal music devices at a sound level of 85 dB or more, on average.

· Exposure to noise above 85 dB is the level at which hearing loss can occur, and many personal music devices have the ability to reach at least 95 dB.

· Exposure to noise above 85 dB is the level at which hearing loss can occur, and many personal music devices have the ability to reach at least 95 dB.

· Studies on hearing and noise exposure have found that youth typically listen to personal music devices at a sound level of 85 dB or more, on average.