

Music and Hearing Loss

Is my Music too Loud?

- Any sound at a level of 85 decibels (dB) for an extended amount of time can be harmful to your hearing. Did you know that music can also be dangerous?
- Personal MP3 Players (e.g., iPod) can emit sounds as loud as 100 dB!
- Amplified concerts (any genre) and dance clubs often exceed 100 dB and can reach 120 dB!

Effects of Loud Music

- A temporary threshold shift (TTS) is a decrease in your hearing after exposure to loud sounds. Damage has been done to the delicate hair cells of your inner ears – this is why you hear “ringing.”
- While TTS eventually goes away, repeated and prolonged exposure to loud sound levels will cause permanent hearing loss.
- This damage first occurs in the high frequency regions of hearing, causing you to miss the soft consonants of speech (e.g., “s” sound). You might think that others are mumbling.

Tips for Safer Personal MP3 Use

- Keep the volume down.
- Limit the amount of time you spend listening to music.
- Take breaks. Give your ears a chance to rest between listening sessions.
- Use noise-cancelling headphones or noise-isolation ear buds to block noise.

Tips for Safer Listening at Concerts

- Use disposable or custom-made earplugs!
- Foam earplugs are disposable and can be purchased at your local drugstore. They reduce dangerous sounds levels but do not preserve the quality of music.
- Musician’s earplugs are custom-made to fit your ear. They contain special filters that preserve the fidelity of music so that sound quality is clear and natural, not muffled.

Who Uses Musicians Earplugs?

- Instrumentalists and vocalists
- Concert and club-goers
- Sound mixers and editors
- Music teachers and students
- Bartenders and wait staff
- Sports enthusiasts