



## Kids, Hearing Loss, and Popular Music Listening Devices

On any given day you will probably see a number of children/young adults walking down the street listening to music via iPods, MP3 players and DVD players. There may be a lot more going on besides just listening to his/her favorite songs. A recent poll by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association indicates that more high school students are showing some form of hearing loss than the previous generation. The bad news is that noise-related hearing loss is permanent! The good news is that it can be prevented.

According to audiologist Angela King, "People with good hearing have tiny hair cells that line the inner ear and transmit signals to the brain, which it interprets as sound. When repeatedly exposed to uncomfortably loud noises (above 80dB), including music through headphones and at concerts, those hair cells require a rush of blood or oxygen, otherwise "they effectively die". Temporary hearing loss or tinnitus (ringing in the ears) is a sign that hair cells are trying to recover, but "over time recovery becomes impossible and hearing is permanently impaired".

### ***Symptoms of noise-related hearing loss include:***

- Turning up the volume on the TV or radio.
- Saying "what" or "huh" during regular conversation.
- Experiencing ringing in the ears.

Popular "earbud" type headphones which fits directly into the ear increase the sound signal by as much as 6-9 decibels. Oftentimes, students listen to music at 110-120 decibels. That's equivalent to the noise generated from attending a rock concert or sandblasting.

### ***To prevent potential hearing loss, audiologists recommend:***

- Turning down the volume to levels below 60 percent of maximum volume.
- Limiting listening time to no more than 60 minutes per day.
- Wearing headphones that fit over the ear.

**The bottom line is that parents need to monitor their  
child's listening habits**