

## Healthwatch: Turn it Down!... Preventing Noise Induced Hearing Loss

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Our parent's nagging that we "turn down the music...or you're going to go deaf!" was well founded. Noise induced hearing loss results from damage to the inner ear caused by exposure to loud noise either after just one exposure to very loud sound (120 decibels or dBA) or with repeated exposures to moderate noise (85 dBA or greater).

Noise induced hearing loss is usually gradual, and the signs may go unnoticed at first:

- Muffled or distorted hearing.
- Difficulty hearing sounds such as birds singing, crickets, chirping, alarms, telephones, and doorbells.
- Difficulty understanding speech during telephone or group conversations.
- Pain or ringing in the ears after exposure to excessively loud sounds.

Many common, everyday noises can cause hearing loss...

**Hazardous Sound Exposure Limits** (*National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health*):

Noise Type	Decibels	Exposure Limit*	Notes
Cafeteria noise	85	8 hours	*Repeated exposures at these lengths of times may cause hearing damage. Ear protection is recommended for repeated or prolonged exposures to prevent hearing loss.
Band class	90	2 hours	
Power tools, snowmobile, wood shop	105	5 minutes	
Personal stereo at high volume	105	5 minutes	
Chainsaw; rock concert	110	1.5 minutes	
Ambulance siren	120	9 seconds	
Firearms, firecrackers	140-165	Immediate damage!	

So "Turn it Down!" or you may find yourself going deaf...and noise induced hearing loss cannot be medically or surgically corrected.

Take advantage of regular hearing screening for your child offered at their school or by their doctor at routine check ups. Hearing tests (audiograms) are recommended at school entry, ages 6, 8, and 10, once during middle school and once during high school.

Debbie Benson, speech therapist for the Julian School District will be offering audiograms after church on Sunday May 17.

Check out <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/noise> for more information on this topic.