



Handy Handouts®

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Number 421



Keeping the Noise Down: Protecting Your Child's Hearing

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We live in a noisy world. Everything from the refrigerator to the siren of a fire engine makes noise. Most of the time the noise levels are safe, but sometimes we unknowingly expose ourselves to dangerous levels of noise.

Sound is measured in decibels. A whisper is about 30 decibels while normal conversation is about 60 decibels. Prolonged exposure to any noise at or above 85 decibels, for example a leaf blower, can cause Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL.) In recent years, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) have released studies that show we may be on the verge of an epidemic of hearing loss in children and adolescents. This may be attributed to a lack of education and awareness regarding the dangers of noise exposure. Some common indicators that the noise level is too loud include:

- You have to raise your voice to be understood by someone standing nearby.
- The noise hurts your ears.
- You develop a buzzing or ringing in your ears, even temporarily.
- You don't hear as well as you normally do until several hours after you get away from the noise.

***It's a Noisy Planet*, a program of the NIH suggests the following tips to provide safe listening environments in the home and community:**

- Educate yourself on the sources of potentially damaging sound.
- Set the maximum volume on MP3 players or other electronic devices to a safe level.
- Tape a volume scale on your television or remote control to show where the sound level can be listened to safely.
- Place red stickers on objects that can reach unsafe decibel levels. Remind family members that a red sticker means that they should reduce the amount of time they are around these devices or use hearing protection.
- Place hearing protection, such as earplugs or earmuffs, near noisy devices or tools. Place next to the lawn mower, tractor, or in the garage.
- Get your child's school involved in reducing noise levels in school by suggesting:
 - Invest in a decibel meter to measure noise levels in the gym, cafeteria, music class, and hallways.

- Make students aware of how noisy these areas are and their potential risks to hearing.
- Partner with a local drugstore or sporting goods store to distribute earplugs for loud events such as concerts and sporting events.

NIHL may be on the rise among children and adolescents, but implementing these simple steps can help them protect their hearing for a lifetime. To find out more about NIHL see Handy Handout #315 Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) –

[http://www.handyhandouts.com/viewHandout.aspx?hh_number=315&nfp_title=Noise-Induced+Hearing+Loss+\(NIHL\)](http://www.handyhandouts.com/viewHandout.aspx?hh_number=315&nfp_title=Noise-Induced+Hearing+Loss+(NIHL))

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[Item #BGO-133](#)

400 Webber Sign Language Cards
[Item #WSL-100](#)

Hearing Tested Stickers
[Item #STH-100](#)

Webber Phones
[Item #WF-44](#)