

SAFETY MEMO

December 7th, 2020 – Hearing Health



Did you know?

Issue

Hearing loss is the third most common physical condition, after arthritis and heart disease. According to Johns Hopkins Cochlear Center for Hearing and Public Health, approximately 38.2 million people suffer from some degree of hearing loss in the United States. Age is the strongest predictor for hearing loss among adults, 91% of the cases are among adults aged 50 years old and older.

According to the World Health Organization, 1.1 billion teenagers and young adults worldwide are at risk of hearing loss because of the use of unsafe audio devices. The organization advise to enjoy music through headphones at no more than 60% volume for no more than 60 minutes a day.

Approximately 15% of Americans have noise-induced hearing loss because of loud work. Make sure to use the appropriate PPE when working at a client site that have elevated noise levels. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends workers to wear hearing protectors when engaged in work which exposes them to noises equal or higher than 85dB for a period of 8-hour.

Causes

Hearing loss can be caused by:

- Exposure to 85dB for a period of 8 hours.
- Expose to 95dB for a 15 minutes period.
- Exposure to 120dB or more could cause immediate damage.

Hearing health is damaged gradually, therefore most people develop the disease as they grow older. Exposure to loud noises kill the nerve endings in our inner ear. Because of this fact, it is important to identify the disease in early diagnostics and take the appropriate recommendations to mitigate the damage. However, you do not have to get diagnosed to start taking precautions against that.

Recommendations

- Use appropriate PPE when working at a client site with noise levels higher than 85dB.
- Use earplugs when experiencing loud noises such as clubs, concerts, lawnmowers, chainsaws, or any noises that forces you to shout to the person next to you for them to hear you.



Figure 1. Image du cdc.gov.

- Give your ears time to recover after loud noise exposure. Studies point that your ears need 16 hours of quiet after a loud night out.
- Do not use cotton swabs as they could damage your ear drum. Ear wax is not only normal, but good to protect your ears against harmful particles from entering your ear canal.
- Take medications only as directed as anti-inflammatory drugs can impact your hearing ability.
- Keep your ears dry as moisture allow bacteria to enter and attack the ear canal.
- Ask your primary care for earring screenings during regular checkups to prevent undesired surprises!

