

have you  
heard?



HearPO's Hearing Health Newsletter

Fall 2014

## School screenings may miss high-frequency hearing losses



Parents who suspect a hearing loss in their children may not want to rely on school-administered hearing tests for an accurate diagnosis. In many states, school screenings focus primarily on low-frequency hearing loss, which often occurs as a result of fluid in the ear after a bad cold or ear infection.

However, school screenings may not detect high-frequency hearing losses, typically observed in adolescents or older students and caused by exposure to excessive noise, according to a study conducted at Penn State University. The research involved 282 students at Hershey High School.

Students who miss high-frequency sounds may not hear important consonant sounds that help them distinguish between similar words (e.g., "thirst" vs. "first"). Good hearing is essential for speech and language development, making it vital for learning and communication. Students with an untreated hearing loss may be at risk for problems with academic achievement, as well as social isolation and poor self-esteem.

A hearing evaluation by an independent hearing healthcare professional may be needed for children who exhibit the signs of hearing loss. HearPO can help you find a qualified provider in your area. Call for assistance.

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## Tips for preventing childhood hearing loss

- Identify the sources of loud sound — generally considered 85 decibels or higher — and avoid or limit exposure.
- Turn down the volume of music systems; if possible, lock in the settings to restrict the maximum volume.
- Follow the "80/90 rule" when listening to an MP3 player — listen at no more than 80% of maximum volume for no more than 90 minutes.
- Wear hearing protection when exposed to sounds louder than 85 decibels for 30 minutes or longer.
- Purchase kid-friendly hearing protection products, such as colorful, volume-limiting headphones and safe-listening earphones.



# Possible signs of hearing loss in children



If you suspect a hearing loss, call HearPO at **1.877.203.0682** today to schedule a hearing evaluation.

# OCTOBER IS NATIONAL PROTECT YOUR HEARING MONTH

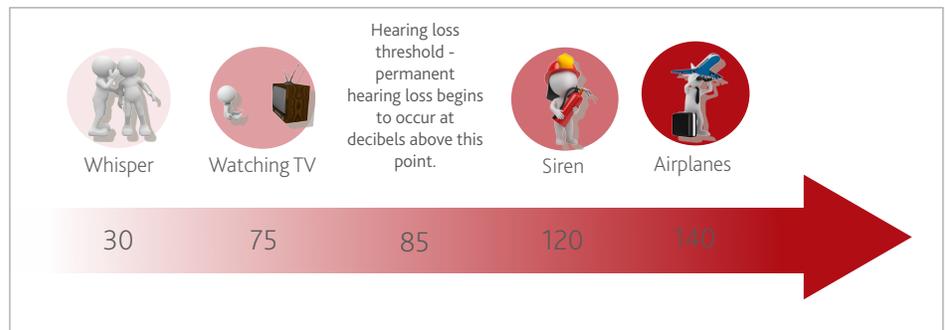
Learn what you can do to protect this precious sense

At school, at home and at play, youngsters are exposed to a host of dangerous noises, from MP3 players at full volume to large crowds at sporting events (and this applies to moms and dads, too!).

During National Protect Your Hearing Month and all year long, you can take steps to safeguard yourself and your family from noise-induced hearing loss, which affects an estimated 12 million Americans, according to the American Academy of Audiology (AAA).

How much noise is too much? As a rule of thumb, prolonged exposure to any noise over 85 decibels can cause damage. So can brief exposure to a very intense sound, such as a gunshot near the ear. Because few people carry decibel meter with them, the AAA offers a few indicators to help you determine whether a situation is too loud and potentially dangerous:

- Having to shout over background noise to be heard
- The noise is painful to your ears
- Your ears are ringing during and/or after exposure to the noise



Fortunately, noise-induced hearing loss is very preventable by following a few common-sense avoidance and hearing protection strategies.

If you suspect a hearing loss caused by noise or other factors, call HearPO to schedule a hearing evaluation.

## When a stadium sets a noise record, there's one winner — and many losers.

Which stadium is loudest in the National Football League? On October 13, 2013, fans of the Kansas City Chiefs set a new noise record at Arrowhead Stadium — 137.5 decibels. Later in the season, Seattle Seahawks fans bested Kansas City fans by 0.1 decibels at CenturyLink Field.

Whether Seattle's 137.6-decibel record will be broken during the 2014 season remains to be seen. Whatever the outcome, fans may be the losers. These noise levels — similar to a jet taking off in close proximity — can cause irreversible hearing loss in a matter of minutes.

In fact, dangerous noise levels regularly occur at stadiums across the country, as well as at a variety of other events, from automobile races to concerts to fireworks shows.

"Many people who attend these events do not use hearing protection — a sad fact that is repeated again and again," says Amber Lund, Director of HearPO. "Today, an estimated 36 million Americans have a hearing loss, and exposure to excessive noise is the number-one cause. Fortunately, this type of hearing loss is easily preventable with affordable hearing protection devices." By all means, go and root for your favorite team — but do it in a "hearing-safe" manner. If you suspect a hearing loss, call HearPO today and schedule your hearing appointment.





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