iPod Usage

Today iPods and other MP3 players have become regular household commodities across the United States. With these devices, music is blared directly into the ears, the volume is often high, and the devices hold thousands of songs that are listened to for long periods of time. Hearing loss is related to the volume and duration of sound. Hearing specialists have noticed a change in teenagers, where many show signs of noise-induced hearing loss that would not be expected until middle age.

The recommended length of time to listen to music is one hour per day at 60 percent of maximum volume. If you plan to listen for more than one hour, the volume should be turned down below 60 percent. The maximum sound levels of MP3 players and iPods are estimated to be between 100 and 115 decibels. Concluding that MP3 players appear to produce high enough sound levels to pose a risk of hearing loss if used at high volumes for extended periods.

The problem with iPods and other MP3 players is we turn them loud enough so we can hear the music and block out the street noise. This can make them dangerously loud.

To protect your hearing, do the following:

- Set the volume while at home or in a quiet place, not in the street.
- Set the volume so you can still hear sounds around you and carry on a conversation.
- When you go in a louder area, don't turn up your iPod or MP3 player.
- If the problem persists, consider buying noise canceling earphones that will block out street noise so you do not have to turn up the volume to hear the music comfortably.

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