

## **Lend Me Your Ear**

Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) can be caused by a one time exposure such as a loud explosion or by continuous exposure to loud sounds over an extended period of time. Harmful noise triggers the formation of molecules inside the ear that can damage or kill hair cells in the ear. The hair cells are small sensory cells in the inner ear that convert sound energy into electrical signals that travel to the brain. Once damaged, the hair cells cannot grow back.

Six years ago, researchers at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that noise induced hearing loss is affecting nearly 13% of Americans between 6 and 19. That translates to more than 5 million young people in the U.S.

Although there isn't a lot of conclusive studies at this point in time – researchers, scientists and audiologists are worried that it is the amount of time kids are listening to loud music through headphones and ear buds that leads to hearing loss. People should consider following the 60/60 rule. No more than 60 minutes a day and not louder than 60% of the dial.

According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, there are four major ways in which hearing loss affects kids:

1. It causes delay in the development of receptive and expressive communication skills (speech and language).
2. The language deficit causes learning problems that result in reduced academic achievement.
3. Communication difficulties often lead to social isolation and poor self-concept.
4. It may have an impact on vocational choices.

Hearing loss accumulates over your lifespan and when hearing loss due to normal aging combined with extended listening and loud volumes through headphones and ear buds, today's kids will be accelerating their hearing loss in their 50's and 60's. No one needs suffer the ramifications of unnecessary hearing loss.

For more information go to:

[www.nicld.nih.gov/health/hearing/noise.asp](http://www.nicld.nih.gov/health/hearing/noise.asp).  
[www.asha.org/public/hearing/disorders/effects..htm](http://www.asha.org/public/hearing/disorders/effects..htm)

or Google search: noise induced hearing loss.