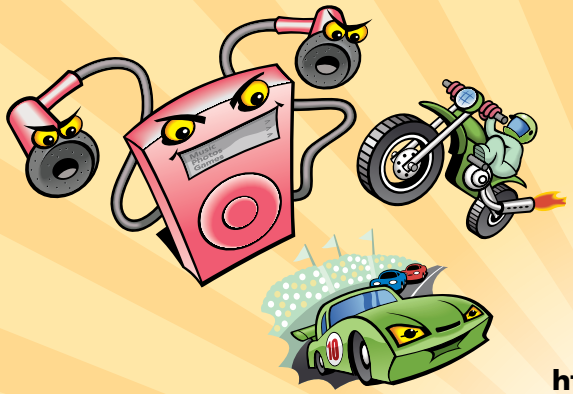


It's A Noisy Planet
PROTECT THEIR HEARING®

A program of the National Institutes of Health

http://www.noisyplanet.nidcd.nih.gov

Teachable Moments About Healthy Hearing

A teachable moment offers a great opportunity to help your tween learn what to do to protect his or her hearing from noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). You can use any spontaneous or unplanned event as a learning opportunity. In these moments, your child is suddenly open to learning new ideas. Teachable moments are particularly effective because they give real-world meaning to the lesson you want to share. For example, it's much easier for a child to understand that noise can damage his or her hearing after an ambulance, with its siren screaming, has passed by.

What are some teachable moments about healthy hearing?

A teachable moment can occur almost anywhere—in your home, at school events, and during work and leisure time activities. Any time you are exposed to potentially damaging noise levels and you take action to protect your tween's hearing is a teachable moment. When you are mowing the lawn or doing carpentry, wear hearing protectors. When you are motorboating, hunting, or at a sports event, wear earplugs or earmuffs. Children often learn healthy behaviors by following the example of others. Let your tween see you protecting your hearing and he will be more likely to protect his own.

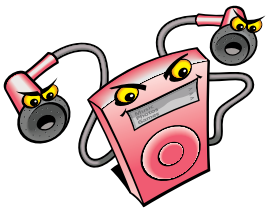
Other examples of teachable moments are:

- **When listening is enjoyable.** At almost any time of day and almost any place, you can share the pleasure of healthy hearing with your tween. If your child comments on a bird singing or a favorite band playing, this is a teachable moment. Talk with your tween about sounds in her environment and why healthy hearing is important.
- **When listening may *not* be enjoyable.** A good time to discuss why hearing needs to be protected—and how—is when the noise around you is too loud. A few examples of noisy situations are:
  - Waiting for a subway.
  - Walking by a road with heavy traffic or construction.
  - Doing yard work or housework involving noisy appliances.
  - Attending a sports event or concert.
  - Watching a parade.

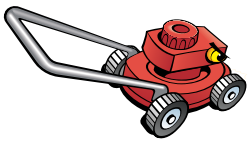
Teachable Moments About Healthy Hearing

In these and other noisy situations, help your child remember three ways to protect his or her hearing:

- Turn down the sound.
- Avoid the noise (walk away).
- Block the noise (wear hearing protectors, such as earplugs or earmuffs).



- **When noise is in the news.** NIHL has received increasing attention in the news. Hearing protectors have also been featured in news stories, such as when celebrities or their children wear earmuffs to protect their hearing while attending a concert. A photo of any professional wearing hearing protectors, including musicians, race car drivers, and construction workers, can be part of a teachable moment. Some news articles discuss the loudness of certain sounds, such as a whale's song or the noise levels in restaurants. Point out news articles involving sound and hearing to your tween. For stories of noises in the news, visit the Noisy Planet Web site.
- **When buying noisy toys and musical instruments.** Battery-operated toys, video games, and band instruments can create a lot of noise. When buying these items, discuss ways to limit your child's exposure to dangerous noise levels. For example, some toys allow you to turn the sound off or to lower the volume. At the music store, look for earplugs that musicians use to protect their hearing.



- **When your tween makes a healthy hearing choice.** Is your child listening to the television at a reasonable level? Has she put on earmuffs to mow the lawn? Has he put in earplugs to practice his trumpet? Be alert to opportunities to praise your child for healthy hearing behaviors.

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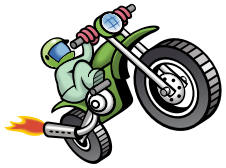
The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) sponsors *It's a Noisy Planet. Protect Their Hearing.* This national public education campaign is designed to increase awareness among parents of children ages 8 to 12 (tweens) about the causes and prevention of noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). With this information, parents and other adults can encourage children to adopt healthy hearing habits before and during the time that they develop listening, leisure, and working habits. To find out more about how to protect your hearing and that of your family, visit the Noisy Planet website at *http://www.noisyplanet.nidcd.nih.gov.*



For more information about your hearing and hearing loss, contact:

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1 Communication Avenue
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Voice: (800) 241-1044
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