

Make Listening Safe

Hearing loss is on the rise



1.1 billion

young people globally are at risk of hearing loss due to unsafe listening practices.

49 million

people aged 12-35 years live with disabling hearing loss.

Among young people aged 12-35 years in middle- and high-income countries:



1 in 2 young people listen to unsafe levels of sound through personal audio devices, such as smartphones, MP3 players and others.



40% are exposed to potentially damaging levels of sound in entertainment venues such as nightclubs, bars and sporting arenas.



Smartphone use is rising globally

Across the world, more and more people are using personal audio devices that play music and other audio content.



Smartphone use grew from **45%** in **2013** to **54%** in **2015** in developing countries, and had already reached 87% of population in developed countries.



Listening to loud sound is unsafe

Regularly listening to music or other audio content at high volume through personal audio devices and being exposed to loud sounds in nightclubs, discotheques, bars or sporting arenas harm one's hearing.



In the United Kingdom, the number of people exposed to loud sounds in social settings has tripled over a **20-year period**.



Noise-induced hearing loss is permanent

Over time listening to loud sounds for prolonged duration can lead to hearing loss, which cannot be treated by medicines or surgery.



In the **United States**, **40 million** people between the ages of 20-69 years are affected by non-occupational noise-induced hearing loss.

Make Listening Safe. Once you lose your hearing, it won't come back!



Safe listening is possible

Hearing loss caused by loud sounds can be prevented through:



Safe technologies



Sound policies



Raised awareness

Governments and manufacturers can halt the rise of hearing loss that results from engaging in practices that are harmful to hearing by:



Ensuring safe personal audio devices

The World Health Organization and the International Telecommunication Union developed a global standard for safe listening devices which recommends safe listening features for personal audio devices. The standard advocates that these features should be made mandatory through government regulation. Manufacturers can also adopt this standard on a voluntary basis.



Promoting safe listening at entertainment venues

Sound levels and sound distribution should be controlled at nightclubs, concerts, and similar venues.

People frequenting these venues should be provided earplugs, access to noise-free spaces and information on safe listening practices.



Increasing awareness

Awareness campaigns should be disseminated to inform young people that safe listening is important for the continued enjoyment of music and other sounds.

Such campaigns should target the population at large, children and young adults, and parents and teachers.



Since 2007, organizers of events in Switzerland are obliged to monitor and notify the public of the levels of sound, display information about hearing damage risk, and distribute free earplugs, as per order of the Federal Office.



In 2009, the European Commission mandated that output levels in personal audio devices be set to a standard of 85 dB, with maximum output of 100 dB.



Dangerous Decibels, a public health campaign has been successful in improving listening practices among schoolchildren in different countries.

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