

# In Case You Haven't 'HERD' About...

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## *Hearing Loss - Early Onset and How to prevent it!*

**HISTORICALLY**, hearing loss has been associated with advanced age and occupation. However, over the last few decades, hearing loss is occurring to younger people in low-risk occupations. Workers in industrial settings such as factories, construction, railroad, shipping, or mining almost accepted the noise hazards associated with those jobs. Yet, due to upgrades in amplification of music in the late 1960s and ever increasing loud music over the next couple of decades, generations of younger people were exposed to the increased volume of noise leading to diminished ability to hear many tones clearly.

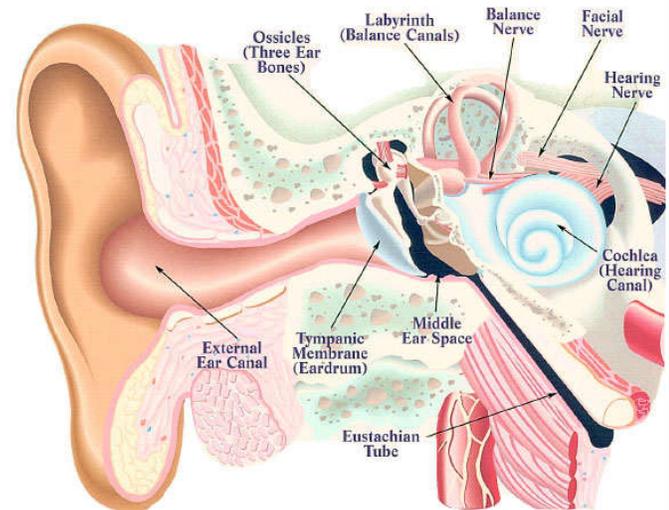
More recently, the development of ear buds and the Walkman in the 1980's, the ever-increasing technology of cell phones, and their internal music systems developed over recent years the impact on our ears has been almost overwhelming. Ear buds provide a high-quality sound directly into the inner workings of our ears. The cochlea receives direct vibration from these devices with the only limiting factor being how loudly we choose to turn the device up or down. Very often young people, in particular, have it up very loud. This constant pounding and vibration leads to extensive damage and hearing loss.

There are steps to be taken to reduce the risk of hearing loss. The World Health Organization recently produced information to address the concerns related to this problem. Below is some of that information.

1. Respect Safe Listening levels. Find the lowest most comfortable level for your hearing. It should never be more than 50% of possible volume.
2. Wear ear plugs when going to a loud concert or night club to reduce the direct impact on your ears.
3. If possible, use noise canceling headphones. Although they are a little more expensive, these remove background noise and allow you to listen at a lower volume.
4. At a loud venue, move away from the direct source of the loud volume such as speakers.
5. Most importantly if you believe you are not able to hear properly, high pitch noises such as door bells or cell phones, seek medical attention. Do not wait the issues will only get worse.

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## The Human Ear



Reference: [www.who.int/pbd/deafness/activities/MLS](http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/activities/MLS)