



**HEARING
AWARENESS
WEEK
23-29 AUGUST**

**PREVENTION
At play**

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In Australia, hearing loss is more prevalent than all national health priorities except musculoskeletal conditions. This means hearing loss is more common than cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus, asthma, cancer and mental health. ¹

ONE IN SIX AUSTRALIANS have a hearing impairment

Once your hearing is damaged it will never return to exactly what it was – even with hearing aids or cochlear implants.

Wearing protective equipment can help to prevent this hearing loss.

Wear earplugs or earmuffs when using home handyman equipment or anything that makes loud or continuous noise, such as musical instruments.

Did you know that you can get special musician's earplugs?

Get better fitting ear buds for your personal stereo player or MP3 player

Protect children from excessive noise – don't expose them to dangerous noise levels. Don't take children to rock concerts where the sound may damage their tender ears.

Even music at the gym could be damaging your hearing. If you have to yell to be heard by the person next to you, the noise could be damaging your hearing. Ask the gym instructor to turn it down.

Having the music up really loud in your car could damage your ears and those of anyone in the car. It doesn't show people how good your stereo system is. It shows people that you will be looking at hearing aids later in your life.

During Hearing Awareness Week, there are opportunities to check your hearing for free and find out more information ways to protect your hearing and prevent further damage.

Visit the Event calendar at www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au to find out what is happening near you.





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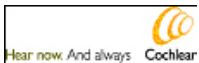


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Background information

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One in six Australians has some form of hearing impairment – its more common than you think.¹

Noise induced hearing loss occurs from exposure to loud sounds.

Noise is defined as unwanted sound. But what is unwanted by some may be wanted by others. The ear does not differentiate between noise and sound. That is done by the brain.

Sounds that are sufficiently loud to damage sensitive inner ear structures can cause irreversible hearing loss.

A small or moderate amount of noise can be enjoyable or stimulating, while exposure to an excessive amount of noise can cause irreparable damage.

Noise can affect us in two ways:

1. Annoyance: when you are simply annoyed or irritated by the noise.
2. Physical damage: when the noise actually damages the delicate hearing mechanism within the inner ear.

While you may not find a noise annoying it may still be sufficiently loud to damage your hearing.

Take care of whatever hearing you have left

Visit your local consumer organisation to get information and practical assistance to learn how to cope with your hearing loss. Organisations such as Better Hearing Australia, Self-help for Hard of Hearing (SHHH) and Deaf Societies are all places where you can get assistance, and there are many more. For further details see

<http://www.deafnessforum.org.au/links.htm#consumer>

¹ Access Economics: Listen Hear! The economic impact and cost of hearing loss in Australia, February 2006