Can Hearing Loss Be Linked to Portable Music Devices?

New studies suggest that nearly 20 percent of young people suffer some level of hearing loss. NBC's Dr. Nancy Snyderman talks about the risks of iPods and other personal music devices on teenagers hearing, and how to prevent hearing loss.

Keywords
Teens, Teenagers, Adolescents, Decibels, Hearing, Hear, Loss, Damage, iPod, Headphones, Loudness, Volume, Concerts, Nerve, Technology, Ear, Drum, Inner, Middle, Brain, Production, Music, Noise, Frequency, Acoustics, Percent, Percentage, Correlation, Causation, Survey, Study, Experiment

Citation

MLA

Can Hearing Loss Be Linked to Portable Music Devices?

https://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/browse/?cuecard=50526

Source: NBC Today Show
Creator: Meredith Vieira/Dr. Nancy Snyderman
Event Date: 2010
Air/Publish Date: 08/18/2010
Clip Length: 00:03:29

Resource Type: Video News Report
Copyright: NBCUniversal Media, LLC.
Copyright Date: 2010

© 2008-2020 NBCUniversal Media, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

APA

CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE

Transcript
Can Hearing Loss Be Linked to Portable Music Devices?
MEREDITH VIEIRA, anchor:
This morning on today's health the rapid rise in teen hearing loss. According to new a study, one in five teenagers has lost at least some of their hearing, a rise of around 30% in just about a decade. Dr. Nancy Snyderman is NBC’s Chief medical editor. Nancy, Good morning to you.
Dr. NANCY SNYDERMAN: Hi.
VIEIRA: one in five, that’s 20% of adolescents. Sounds very serious.
SNYDERMAN: Meredith, I think this is for real and I think it is serious. What teenagers forget and we forgot, too, when we used to go to rock concerts is once you damage the nerve of hearing, it is so fragile this is not the kind of thing you can operate on later or give a medicine for. This is a permanent kind of damage. So this mp3 generation or ipod generation, it's very easy to ramp up the sound beyond what you conceive of as dangerous and the damage can be really serious.
VIEIRA: Yeah, the researchers did not look into the reasons behind the increased hearing loss but you’re already suggesting that it is the mp3, ipods among other things.
SNYDERMAN: They just looked at numbers raised the questions, well, what could it be? Well, I’ll take the stance this morning that I don't think its genetics. I don't think there is suddenly a change in the human animal over ten years that can explain it. What can explain it is the extraordinary technology. You know, once upon a time you put earbuds in your head or put headphones on and you could hear the person next to you. Now the technology is so extraordinary that there is really no bleed of that music. So it goes right against your eardrum, right into your middle ear, and inner ear into the brain and the acoustics are so extraordinary that we want to crank up the sound, because you want to be able to hear the flutes here and the oboes there. And there is so much postproduction in music that what you can hear is extraordinary. And when you crank it up, you can hear it better. And it’s too tantalizing.
VIEIRA: I’m just looking at the decibel levels for mp3’s at maximum level is 100-115 decibels. How
does that compare to what's normal, healthy.

SNYDERMAN: So a decibel is how we measure hearing. A jet engine is high. A rock concert, if you’re just standing there and this is how you and I grew up could be 150 decibels. A jet engine, if you know what that’s like if you’ve been on a commuter plane, it is loud. And then look at the ipod or mp-3 player at 110 decibels. That’s not much difference. And that means you get one minute at 110 decibels at maximum level before you can have permanent hearing. Normal conversation is 60. So you can see, we are in a noise-polluted environment these days. But that is one area of our lives that's very controllable.

VIEIRA: Kids won't turn off the ipods no matter what this study shows, so what is a safe level for them to listen to music?

SNYDERMAN: Look, on every mp3 player, ipod you can look at the bar and see if it's above 50% mark. It shouldn't be, no matter what. As a parent if you can hear what your child is listening to, it's already too loud. If your child is having trouble in school, grades have dropped, doesn't seem to hear you, suddenly it was society seeming to have some problems struggling. Talk to your pediatrician about getting a hearing test. Because sometimes just that piece of paper to say, look, you have already lost hearing, is enough to have it change a child's behavior. And the hearing loss is what we call the higher frequencies. So the first thing kids can't hear are women's voices, mom, and in crowded restaurants can be very difficult to converse. So it’s for real.

VIEIRA: See all these kids when you call say “I can’t hear you anymore, mom, it’s my ears. You know?”

SNYDEMRAN: That’s right

SNYDERMAN: You bet, Meredith.