

ISSUE BRIEF

Protect Your Hearing with PITCH-Perfect Hearing Health Habits

Hearing is a precious resource, which allows us to communicate and engage effectively in the world around us. Sound serves as a critical emotional driver, a warning, an attention keeper, a comfort, and a key element of work, celebration, worship, and intimacy. Imagine not being able to hear your child's cry, a honking horn, a cheering crowd, the chorus of a favorite song, or even the dreaded alarm clock. Now, imagine finding out that your hearing loss was completely preventable.

Ironically, one of the most dangerous threats to healthy hearing is sound itself. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), approximately 5.2 million children/adolescents aged 6-19 years have noise-induced hearing loss, and as many as 40 million adults aged 20-69 have suffered permanent damage to their hearing from noise exposure.¹

Optimize Your Hearing Using the PITCH Technique

PROTECT: Protect your hearing (and your child's hearing). Noise-induced hearing loss is 100% preventable.

Protect your hearing (and your child's hearing) to prevent hearing loss.

- Set volume at a safe level (lower than 85 dB).
- Limit duration of noise exposure.
- Move away from dangerous noise levels. If it is too loud to comfortably carry on a conversation with someone three feet away, the noise level is unsafe.
- Wear hearing protection.

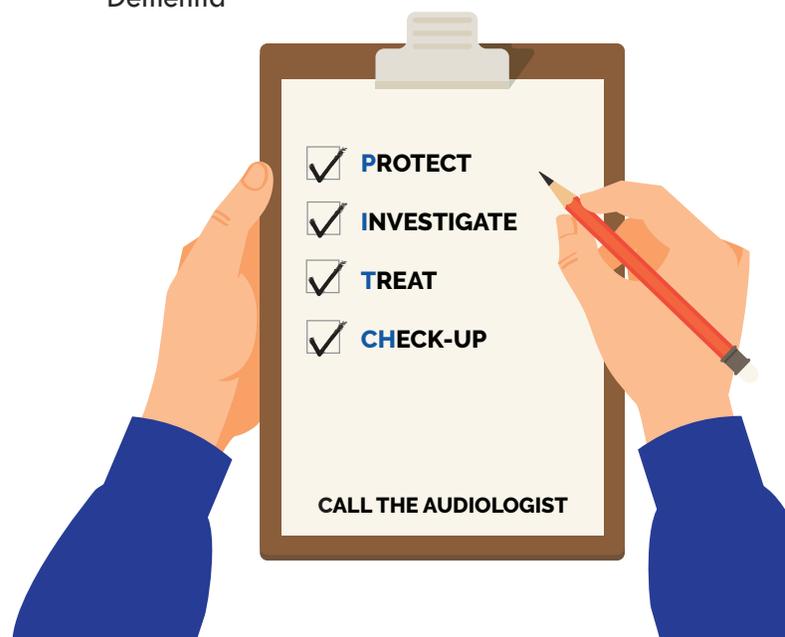
INVESTIGATE: Investigate problems immediately.

If you suspect that you, or a loved one has a hearing problem, or if you experience any of the following symptoms, contact an audiologist immediately to investigate the issue:

- Pain or discomfort in the ear
- Visible congenital or traumatic deformity of the ear
- Acute or chronic dizziness
- Suspected foreign body or object in the ear
- Drainage from the ear
- Sudden or rapidly progressive hearing loss
- Unilateral (one-sided) hearing loss

TREAT: Treat hearing loss promptly. Untreated hearing loss is associated with the following conditions:

- Depression
- Social isolation
- Increased risk of falls
- Fatigue
- Reduced cognitive function
- Dementia



The longer you wait to seek treatment, the more difficult rehabilitation can be. When it comes to restoring hearing, it is not just a matter of turning the sound “on” or “up” again—it is much more complex. In people with healthy hearing, the brain translates sounds so that they are comprehended and understood in context. Periods of untreated hearing loss can result in the need to retrain the brain to be able to process sound efficiently and effectively again.

Treatment for hearing problems does not always involve hearing aids, nor is treatment necessarily expensive. Your audiologist can provide you with rehabilitative solutions and counseling options that optimize your hearing, and meet your lifestyle and budgetary needs.

CHECK: Check your hearing regularly. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends a hearing screening at birth; at ages 4, 5 and 6, years; an assessment using audiometry between 11 and 14 years; between 15 and 17 years; and between 18 and 21 years.² The ADA recommends asymptomatic

adults receive an audiologic evaluation, and hearing conservation counseling every five years, beginning at 20 years of age, and an annual evaluation beginning at 50 years of age. Those involved in professional or recreational pursuits that involve noisy environments (e.g. aviation, construction, entertainment and sporting venues, manufacturing, mining, military operations, and farming) are at highest risk for noise exposure, and should be tested annually, or at intervals determined by an audiologist, or required by law.

Call your audiologist. An audiologist can help you perfect your PITCH habits. Audiologists are doctoral-trained clinicians who diagnose and treat hearing and balance problems. An audiologist can provide you with custom hearing protection, counseling, and a plan of care to help you optimize your hearing over a lifetime.

Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA) member audiologists are dedicated to evidence-based practices in the delivery of hearing and balance health care. To find an audiologist near you, please visit www.audiologist.org.

Decibel (dB) Dosage ³		
Type	dB Level	Safe listening dosage without hearing protection
Whisper	= 25 dB	No risk
Moderate Rainfall	= 55 dB	No risk
Conversation Noise	= 65 dB	No risk
Busy Traffic	= 85 dB	< 8 hours
Lawn Mower	= 95 dB	< 1 hour
Blow Dryer	= 105 dB	< 15 minutes
Rock Concert	= 115 dB	< 30 seconds
Jack Hammer	= 125 dB	Unsafe for any amount of time
Jet Engine	= 135 dB	Unsafe for any amount of time
Shotgun Blast	= 145 dB	Unsafe for any amount of time

¹ Centers for Disease Control Noise-Induced Hearing Loss webpage. Accessed on February 10, 2018 at the following link: www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/noise.html

² Buz Harlor, Allen D., et al. Hearing Assessment in Infants and Children: Recommendations Beyond neonatal Screening. American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Practice and Ambulatory Medicine. *Pediatrics*. Vol. 124 (4) 1252-1263; DOI: 10.1542/peds.2009-1997.

³ Dangerous Decibels website. Accessed on February 10, 2018 at the following link: dangerousdecibels.org/education/information-center/decibel-exposure-time-guidelines