



Did you hear that?

According to the Better Hearing Institute, <http://www.betterhearing.org/index.cfm>, one out of every ten Americans has hearing loss with the majority of people being male (60 percent) and below retirement age (65 percent), often as young as 18 years old.

Hearing loss can come from multiple sources. While age and continued exposure to noise of 85 dB or louder are the most common and well known causes of hearing loss; injuries, infections, medicine related loss (ototoxicity), too much ear wax, and smoking can lead to injury or even permanent hearing loss.

So what can you do to protect yourself? You can't stop aging, but you can quit smoking, avoid inserting cotton swabs or other objects into your ears, and always wear a seat belt in the car and a helmet for sports to prevent head and ear injuries. Guard against long exposure to loud noises. Next time you mow the lawn or go to a loud concert remember to wear ear plugs. Keep the television and stereo volume low. When flying, swallow and yawn often at take-off and landing, and if you have to fly with an upper respiratory illness, remember to take a decongestant shortly before or after landing. Seek medical attention if you have a ringing or buzzing in your ears (tinnitus) or your hearing is muffled.

Interestingly, nutrition can help prevent permanent hearing loss. According to Kathleen Campbell, PhD, director of audiology research at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, "A diet rich in selenium and vitamins A, C, and E has been shown to protect rats and guinea pigs from hearing loss and to lessen the damage caused by loud noises. Additional animal research is probing the potential of magnesium supplements, resveratrol, (that's the antioxidants found in grapes, red wine, and berries), and an element of protein found in cheese and yogurt, although it's too soon to make dietary recommendations for people." From some preliminary research with men, Dr. Campbell found that ingesting magnesium may help minimize the potential for permanent damage if taken within two hours of a sudden hearing loss from infection or exposure to loud noise.

If you do perceive a problem with your ears or hearing, it is important to get medical advice and treatment as soon as possible.



familydoctor.org—Hearing Problems

www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing-- Hearing, Ear Infections, and Deafness

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