

Community resource 5: NOISE and HEARING LOSS

Loud sounds are like a slow poison for ears. When people often listen to loud sounds or spend long periods in noisy places, it causes permanent damage to the hearing cells within our inner ear. Over time, this results in hearing loss and tinnitus (ringing sensation in the ear). People who are most at risk of hearing damage from noise are those who:

- Work in noisy places e.g. manufacturing units, factories and others
- Work in music industry or related jobs e.g. musicians, disc jockeys and others in noisy venues
- Use guns for work or sport
- Regularly listen to music over headphones/earphones at high volume or for long period
- Commonly visit noisy places like bars, concerts, discos, sports arenas

Such hearing loss is PERMANENT, but it can be AVOIDED!

Simple steps that can help:

People working in noisy places:

- Use ear protectors e.g. earplugs to reduce noise exposure
- Take regular breaks in non-noisy areas
- Get an annual audiometry

People that regularly listen to music through headphones/earphones should:

- Listen to your personal audio devices at a volume level below 60% of maximum.
- Use carefully fitted, and, if possible, noise cancelling headphones
- Limit the daily use of personal audio devices. Take listening breaks away from loud sounds
- Use smartphone apps to monitor the sound exposure
- Choose devices with built-in safe listening features

When visiting noisy places like discos or bars, remember to:

- Wear earplugs
- Don't stand or sit close to sources of sound, such as loudspeakers
- Take short listening breaks in a quiet place

People that work in noisy places and those who regularly listen to loud sounds should Check their hearing regularly. hearWHO can be used for this purpose.

hearWHO can help people check and keep track of their hearing status