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Beware! Noisy Toys

You may think that loud noise is only a problem when teenagers listen to loud music or when adults use power tools or shoot guns. But in reality, children and babies are at risk of hearing loss from noisy toys.

For toys, 85dB is the recommended safety limit for noise exposure, at an arm's length away from the ear. Prolonged exposures to levels above 85dB have the potential to cause hearing loss. However, when a child holds a toy directly to the ear, as children often do, the ear may actually receive 120 dB of sound. This level of noise is equivalent to the sound of a jet plane taking off, and can cause pain and permanent hearing loss.

Past research has shown that the most dangerous toys were toy guns, cap guns, vehicles with horns and sirens, walkie talkies, musical instruments, talking dolls and toy vacuum cleaners. The toy guns were found to have the highest noise levels, averaging between 120-143 dB in some studies. This is not safe under any circumstance.

Some of the other noisy toys were found to be safe only if they were used sensibly. For example, do not let children hold noisy toys close to the ear and don't let them play with noisy toys for more than one hour per day. Prior to purchasing a new toy, listen to it. If it sounds too loud, it probably is! As far as the toys that are already in your home, batteries can be removed if they are too noisy and pose a threat to hearing. Consider this as you do your Holiday shopping.



<http://www.asha.org>
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Consumer Affairs <http://www.consumeraffairs.com>

Hearing Under Fire

Did you know that certain cancer treatments have been shown to cause permanent hearing loss? This damage to the inner ear is called ototoxicity. Chemotherapy agents such as cisplatin can, but not always, affect an individual's hearing function. If an individual receives radiation and the ear is included in the radiation field, hearing loss can also occur. Your risk of developing hearing loss increases as the drug accumulates in your body or if you are receiving high doses of the chemotherapy agent.



Chemotherapy agents are known to affect the high pitch "frequency" ranges of your hearing first. Since most consonant sounds are located in the high frequencies, the clarity of speech is affected. You may still be able to make an educated guess about what is being said as long as you are facing that person and you have a general understanding of the topic of conversation. Also, when a person has a high frequency hearing loss, communicating in background noise is more difficult because the noise is essentially covering up the pitch areas where you have better hearing. Additional warning signs that your hearing may be affected by the cancer treatments include tinnitus (commonly ringing or buzzing), difficulty understanding soft speech, asking for repetition, dizziness, and/or a muffled sound quality.

Prior to receiving any cancer treatments, have your hearing evaluated by an audiologist to obtain a baseline. This will rule out any hearing loss that may be present due to family history, age, or prior noise exposure. Your hearing should be monitored throughout your cancer treatments to ensure that no changes are taking place.

If a hearing loss does occur during your cancer treatments, your doctor will most likely not change the course of treatment because his/her first priority is curing the cancer. On the flip side, your audiologist can help you to maintain your communicative ability. They will continue to monitor your hearing sensitivity and recommend appropriate assistive listening devices, communication strategies, or hearing aids, when necessary, so that you are able to maintain a great quality of life. It is important to realize that the appropriate assistive listening device or hearing aid may change throughout the course of your cancer treatments if the hearing loss changes.

Protecting your hearing from exposure to loud noises is something everyone should be aware of, but it is especially crucial for the individual receiving chemotherapy or radiation. Any exposure to loud noises while you are receiving these chemotherapy agents (and up to 6 months after your last treatment) can increase your chance of experiencing permanent hearing loss. Hearing protection devices should be worn consistently if exposure to loud noises cannot be avoided.

Balance: Vestibular Rehabilitation



This is an exercise-based approach to remediating dizziness and dis-equilibrium symptoms associated with a disorder of the vestibular (balance) system in the ear. The symptoms that occur from problems in the balance system can reduce the patient's ability to move about without imbalance or spinning sensations. Even moderate dizziness can result in a significant reduction of movement and confidence that can diminish quality of life, reduce employability and affect all aspects of one's life.

A lot of patients who are in need of **rehabilitation** have developed problems such as decreased strength, increased tension, loss of range-of-motion, muscle fatigue and headaches, in addition to their dizziness. A common approach has always been to medicate such pa-

tients. However, many of the medications used for inner ear disorders also have the disadvantages of being habit-forming and sedating the patient. This really limits one's activities! Rehabilitation, on the other hand, involves exercises designed to **decrease dizziness and increase balance** function and activity levels.

We provide this service to our patients. Ask about it!

Elks Hearing & Balance Center

When Might I Use an Assistive Listening Device (ALD)?



Do you find that even with hearing aids there are situations that remain problematic (ie. TV, phone, concerts or shows at the Morrison Center or local theatre)? Hearing aids are great, but they work best if what you want to hear is within 10 feet. Beyond that, noise from other people, re-verboration (sound waves bouncing), and distance, play a big part in how well you will understand. That's when

you think, "I can hear but can't understand!" Assistive Listening Devices are necessary for those types of environments. They are situation specific, such as headphones that allow you to hear an actor's voice 6 inches from your ear, or a personal amplifier for the TV. If you need more information, contact the Idaho Center for Assistive Technology at 377-8070.

Elks Hearing & Balance Center

New Developments at the Elks Hearing and Balance Center!

- Our Nampa office is relocating in January 2011 to 172 2nd Avenue South.
- Dr. Kari Paynter got married in August. Her new last name is Spaete. Congratulations Dr. Spaete!
- Congratulations also to Dayna Huntwork, the first certified pediatric vestibular therapist in Idaho and one of the first in the country.
- Our staff have attended some educational conferences on Early Hearing Detection & Intervention and the State Conference for Speech, Hearing & Language.
- Our Audiology Program Manager, Erika Blanchard, presented at the Family Support Conference in Kansas City and Dr. Debbie Baerlocher presented at Early Years in Boise.
- Our Toddler Playgroup's next meeting is scheduled for 12/5 from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm. Join us for caroling and crafts.
- We have a new audiologist in the Meridian location. Welcome to Dr. Brenda Mecier. She comes to us with a lot of experience in hearing aids and the adult population. We are very excited to have her join our group.

Elks Hearing & Balance Center

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510 N. 2nd St., Suite 201
Boise, ID 83702
(208) 489-4999

EAGLE
3101 East State St., Suite 2108
Eagle, ID 83616
(208) 489-4975

MERIDIAN
520 S. Eagle Rd., Suite 1225
Meridian, ID 83642
(208) 489-5999

NAMPA
220 10th Ave. South
Nampa, ID 83651
(208) 489-5950
(Clinic moving to new location January 2011)

ONTARIO
1182 SW 4th Avenue
Ontario, OR 97914
(541) 881-0970

Hearing Aid Technology Update



BlueTooth technology™ for the TV, remote control and cell phone. Give us a call to chat about whether this hearing aid technology would be appropriate for your hearing loss and listening needs.

If you have been told you have a hearing loss in the high pitches and have not been able to successfully wear hearing aids in the past, or are in need of new aids; know that the technology has improved drastically and there are hearing aids that work really well for your type of hearing loss. It was tricky in the past with the older technology, but digital hearing aids, especially those with receiver-in-the-ear technology, have made the benefits of using hearing aids available to patients with high-frequency hearing loss. One of the newest products on the market, ReSound Alera™ has been very successful for our patients from the perspective of sound quality and its use with



Unite™ Phone Clip



Unite™ TV Streamer



Unite™ Remote

Funny

A flight attendant on a plane bound for Cincinnati found a passenger sitting in first class whose ticket called for coach seating. Twice she asked him to return to his proper seat, and twice he pointed to his ears and shook his head as though to indicate he was hard of hearing and couldn't understand her. The flight attendant went to the captain and explained the situation, saying, "I think he's just pretending to be hard of hearing and simply trying to stay in first class." The captain nodded, went back to the passenger, leaned over, and whispered something in his ear. The passenger immediately got up and returned to his seat in the coach section. The flight attendant was curious and asked the captain just what he had said to the man. "Not much," the captain replied. "All I said was, first class does not stop in Cincinnati."

*"Do you hear me?"
Harris Publications*

Special Offer Exclusive For Our Readers!

FREE Balance Screenings!

Call to schedule a time with a certified vestibular therapist at any of our 5 locations. Please present this coupon when you come in for the appointment.

This coupon is valid for 3 months – March 31, 2011.