

Fireworks can cause hearing loss in children

June 29 2010, by Julie Preble

(PhysOrg.com) -- As the Fourth of July approaches, parents should remember that fireworks could cause permanent hearing loss in children, says a Purdue expert.

"One large acoustic event - when it is very loud at one time - can cause [hearing loss](#)," says Jennifer Simpson, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences and director of the Audiology Clinic.

Having children wear earplugs during a fireworks show can help reduce the risk of hearing loss, Simpson says. She also added that dampening the sound could make a fireworks show less frightening to children.

Noise-induced hearing loss also can be caused by extended [noise exposure](#) and is typically permanent. Concerts, power tools, guns and [fireworks](#) are a few of the noises that can cause hearing loss.

Everyone is susceptible to noise-induced hearing loss, but children seem to be around noise now more so than adults, Simpson says.

"Monitor your children's volume on any kind of MP3 player device, and make sure that it isn't too loud," she says. "The longer you wear something that's loud, the more damage it can cause. So you want to turn down the volume and shorten the time you listen to music."

Another common way children can lose hearing is due to ear infections. However, this hearing loss is usually temporary, she says.

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, ear infections are the most common illnesses in babies and young children, with three out of four [children](#) experiencing an [ear infection](#) by the time they are 3 years old.

If a child does have an ear infection, it's important to take them to your [primary care](#) provider for treatment. Once the infection is gone and there is no more fluid in the ear, the child's hearing should return to normal, Simpson says.

More information: For more information about noise-induced hearing loss, visit www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing/noise.asp

Provided by Purdue University

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