

Youth are quietly losing their hearing

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Children and teens constantly plugged into personal listening devices, such as phones, computers or music players, could be harming their ears without realizing it, says a Purdue University audiologist.

"High-frequency [hearing](#) loss doesn't hurt, so kids don't know they are damaging their ears," says Shannon Van Hyfte (pronounced Hefty) director of the M.D. Steer Audiology Clinic and clinical assistant professor of speech, language and hearing sciences. "Audiologists are seeing [hearing loss](#) in younger people, and it's not just that they are plugged in, but they are plugged in too loud and for extended periods of time. It used to be that concerts or the occasional loud noise exposure were the biggest concerns for young people, but today it's daily exposure that can have lifelong consequences."

Also, that exposure can happen during the school day as children use [ear buds](#) and headphones for learning devices in the classroom. A general guide is that a student should be able to hear the teachers or parents while listening to the headphone or ear buds. Additionally, safe-listening headphones can be used which limit the loudness level that can be reached.

"Hearing loss can affect children socially and academically, but parents and teachers have the opportunity to teach them the importance of limiting loud sounds and learning how to exercise good hearing health," Van Hyfte says.

Provided by Purdue University

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