

Protect your hearing this July 4th

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While fireworks may be bright and beautiful, they're also noisy. And a single loud blast or explosion that lasts less than a second can cause immediate and permanent [hearing loss](#), the American Speech-Language-

Hearing Association (ASHA) warns.

"The Fourth of July, perhaps more than any other holiday, is associated with loud noise," said Janice Trent, vice president for audiology practice for ASHA's Board of Directors. "Some people may opt for quieter celebrations—but for those that don't, we encourage them to use basic [hearing protection](#) in the form of earplugs."

[Noise-induced hearing loss](#) is completely preventable, ASHA noted as it offered a series of tips for enjoying the holiday safely.

Wearing [hearing protection](#) is a must, it said. Earplugs are inexpensive, easy to find and use, and do a great job of keeping ears safe, Trent said. For young children, she recommended well-fitting earmuffs. Both earplugs and earmuffs are available in stores and online.

Noise-induced [hearing loss](#) is irreversible and can happen at any age, she pointed out.

Besides wearing hearing protection, keep your distance from noise sources, such as at a [fireworks](#) launch site. The closer you are, ASHA emphasized, the more likely you are to hurt your ears.

Impulse noise greater than 140 dBP, or decibel peak pressure, will instantly damage hearing. At 3 feet, fireworks and firecrackers can measure 150 dBP. Safe listening levels are between 75 to 80 decibels.

Leave if you have ringing in your [ears](#) or any other ear discomfort, Trent advised.

If you have pain, ringing or difficulty hearing after loud events, contact an audiologist for a hearing evaluation, she added.

More information: The National Institute on Aging has more on [hearing loss](#).

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