

## More Hearing Loss in Teens

A recent study showed a rise in hearing loss among teenagers of 31% comparing 1988 with 2006. Most of it was mild hearing loss in one ear only, but moderate hearing loss in both ears increased also. The risk was higher in boys. The cause is not known but the authors suspect the increase in iPods and other portable music players and listening to high volume music for long periods of time.

Our patients should be aware that frequent listening to loud music (over 85 decibels), particularly with headphones, can permanently damage hearing. "People underestimate their noise exposure," according to the author. We recommend volume limits on iPod and similar players. We also encourage the use of hearing protection (earplugs/earmuffs) when exposed to very loud noise. (Examples include rock concerts and lawnmower use.)



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