

EAR, NOSE & THROAT

Teaching kids to value their hearing

Out of the five senses, hearing is an ability children cannot do without. Protect your child's ears to ensure he/she is able to optimise his/her full speech, academic, developmental potential, and can enjoy a full social and work life in adulthood.



Adjunct A/Prof
Lynne Lim

Ear, Nose & Throat –
Head & Neck Surgeon

Dr Lynne Lim Ear Nose
Throat & Hearing Centre
(Child & Adult)

3 Mount Elizabeth
#17-07 Mount Elizabeth
Medical Centre
Singapore 228510
Tel: 6737 7787
www.drlynnelim.com

Noise is one of the biggest threats to your child's hearing. But unlike many causes of hearing loss – such as genetics, congenital infections like rubella or cytomegalovirus, anatomical ear deformities and perinatal events like severe jaundice – hearing damage from noise is largely within our control.

How we hear

We hear sound when delicate sensory hair cells in our inner ears vibrate. This results in nerve signals that are transmitted to

the brain cortex that decodes the sound. If we overload these delicate hair cells with exposure to loud noises, we damage them – a condition for which there may be no recovery.

Noise generated in the course of our daily activities may be damaging to a child's hearing. So teach your child about dangerous sounds and to value their hearing because once the delicate hair cells in the ear are lost, they are gone forever.

Noise levels

Those at levels below 85 decibels do not harm hearing. These include whispers (30dB), normal conversation (60dB), dishwashers, food mixers and washing machines (85dB). But noise levels that exceed 85 decibels can result in noise-induced hearing loss if they are sustained. These include loud traffic noise, motorboats, power tools, sirens, jet engines and firecrackers, even squeaky toys. One can be exposed to 85dB for eight hours, but 15 minutes of noise at 105dB can cause hearing loss! Few know that 105dB can be reached by an MP3 player at almost maximum volume.

Set an example


Be a good role model by not avoiding tackling your own hearing loss. Be determined to hear well, and show that you treasure your hearing. Make it a practise to use ear protection when using noisy appliances and insist that your child does

“

Kids under five may not be aware if they have hearing loss of any kind. If they do complain of it – especially after a cold, flu, blocked nasal airways or nasal allergies – they may have glue ear.

”

the same. Avoid over cleaning their ears – or yours – with cotton buds as it is unnecessary and can cause damage. Teach them to move safely away from – or quickly plug their ears with their fingers – when exposed to unexpected loud sounds, and remind them not to listen to music on headphones at a loud volume.

For children, early intervention is critical as speech and language acquisition is rapid in the first few years, and the brain very plastic when young. Be rigorous about a complete hearing evaluation tailored to your child's age. These tests are specialised and often require multiple tests to corroborate the findings. 

GLUE EAR

This is a common condition is which thick fluid is trapped in the middle ear. This results in muffled sound and about 50% hearing loss, and may take up to three months to resolve completely each time.

