Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) - TBT

Noise is part of everyday life, but too much noise can cause permanent and disabling hearing damage. This can be hearing loss that gets worse over time, damage caused by sudden extremely loud noises, or tinnitus (permanent ringing in the ears).

With hearing damage, conversation becomes difficult or impossible, your family complains about the television being too loud, you have trouble using the telephone, and you may be unable to sleep. By the time you notice, it is probably too late.

What is Noise Induced Hearing Loss?

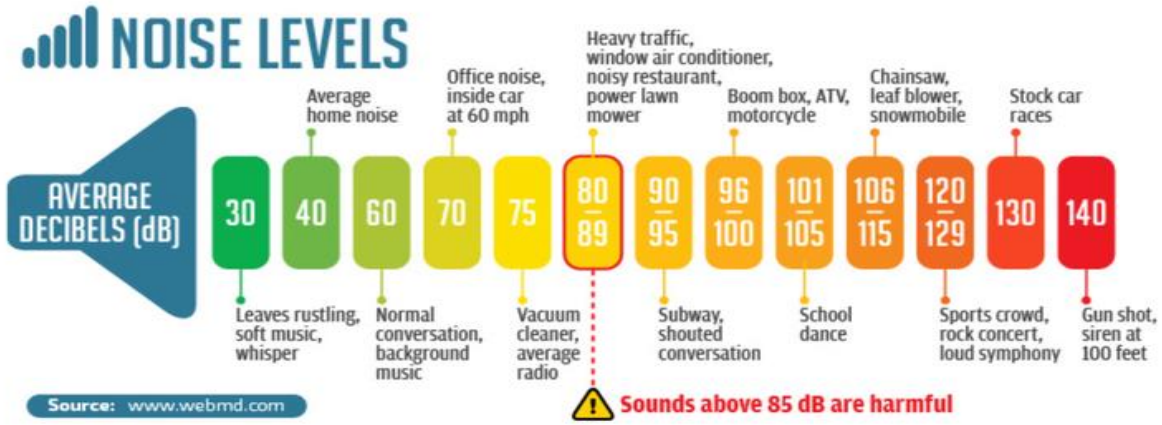
- Damage caused in the cochlea, which is a part of the ear system.
- The fine hairs of the cochlea are damaged and fail to respond to vibration.
- You cannot hear sounds at specific frequencies.
- There is no cure for noise induced hearing.
- Hearing aids can help age related hearing loss but rarely give much help to NIHL. Hearing aids turn up the volume but can never replace our natural hearing structures

Hearing Loss isn't always related directly to excessive noise levels, below are some of the others causes -

You know the noise is a problem when the noise is intrusive or you have to raise your voice to have a normal conversation when about 2m apart!

Construction and demolition work is known to have noisy tasks, such as hammering, working near equipment or machinery, pneumatic impact tools, explosive sources such as

cartridgeoperated tools etc. If you have muffled hearing at the end of the day, even if it is better by the next morning please report it to your line manager or supervisor.



Symptoms and early signs of hearing loss

- Converstion become difficult or impossivle;
- Your family complains aout the televisions being too loud;
- You hae tourble using the telephone;
- You find it difficult to catch sounds lik ‘t’, ‘d’ and ‘s’, so confuse similar words;
- Permanent tinnitus (ringing, whilstling, buzzing or humming in the ears) can also be caused.

What do you have to do?

- Wear any hearing protection you are given properly, following the training you were given.
- Make sure you wear it all the time when you are doing noisy work, and when you are in hearing protection zones. Remember just because you aren’t carrying out the noisy activity,if you are near to it your hearing may be affected.
- Taking off hearing protection even for a few minutes can reduce its overall effectiveness by 40% or more, meaning your hearing could still be damaged.
- Look after your hearing protection. Check for cleanliness, hardening, tearing and misshapenness. Check the hearing protection condition for cracks, holes and damage.
- Attend for your hearing checks. These are important checks that can detect deterioration and changes to your hearing.
- Report any problems with noise-control devices or your hearing or hearing protection straight away.
- Look after your hearing outside of work. Remember there are lots of activities that can damage your hearing outside of work such as loud music, riding motorbikes, DIY projects. Even listening to your own music through your head phones or ear bugs can cause damage it foo loud for too long.