

INTERNATIONAL NOISE AWARENESS DAY

28 April 2010

Hearing disability or loss is New Zealand's largest disability, with one in ten people (one in three over the age of 60) suffering from this. Statistics show it takes, on average, seven years before someone with a hearing loss will visit a hearing clinic. Once hearing is damaged, it often can't be restored. If left untreated, hearing loss can negatively impact on your quality of life.



The Ten Golden Rules to Prevent Hearing Loss:

- 👂 **Get Help** – See your GP if you have sudden severe hearing loss, or if you have some hearing loss that doesn't return to normal in 2 days.
- 👂 **Avoid Foreign Objects** – the wax in your ear canal can make its own way out. Clean your ears with a warm flannel, or have wax removed by your GP.
- 👂 **Use Water Sports Protection** – During high-speed water sports such as water skiing.
- 👂 **Avoid Noise Damage** – Especially prolonged or repeated exposure to loud noise.
- 👂 **Use Safety Gear** – In particular when you are using power tools, using a gun or in any noisy environment.
- 👂 **Dive Carefully** – Too much change in air pressure while scuba diving can cause inner ear damage, dizziness and hearing loss. Equalise regularly during descent.
- 👂 **Avoid Loud Music** – Listen to music at a sensible volume. Especially on a personal stereo or when using headphones.
- 👂 **Avoid Flying with a Heavy Cold** – Ears may be unable to clear during changes in air pressure and this could lead to a ruptured eardrum or inner ear damage.
- 👂 **Act on Ear Infections** – Earaches are often a sign of an ear infection. Be especially careful with children up to 10 years of age.
- 👂 **Avoid Cotton Wool** – Never use cotton wool instead of earplugs. Cotton wool offers no hearing protection at all – it can also cause damage to the ear if pushed too far.



Early Warning signs of a hearing loss:

- 👂 A ringing or buzzing in the ears immediately after exposure to noise
- 👂 A slight muffling of sound after exposure making it difficult to understand people when you leave a noisy area
- 👂 Difficulty understanding speech – meaning you can hear all the words but you can't understand all of them.

PLHEALTH can conduct Annual Audiometry Screening Assessments to enable you to monitor any work-related hearing loss.