

FACT SHEET

World Hearing Day -3rd March 2022

THEME

“To hear for life, listen with care”

“දිවි ඇති තෙක් හඬ අසන්නට, දෙසවන පණ මෙන් සුරකීම”

“வாழ்நாள் முழுவதும் ஒலிகளை ரசிக்க, பாதுகாப்பாக செவிமடுங்கள்”

The theme for year 2022 is “*To hear for life, listen with care*” emphasizing the prevention of hearing loss through safe listening.

Safe listening can be promoted by raising awareness among public through campaigns and media and adopting and implementing safe listening standards at venues and events.

What is safe listening?

- “Safe listening” means listening that does not cause the risk of hearing loss.
- Safe listening prevents recreational loud noise induced hearing loss.

How can loud noise affect ears?

- People get exposed to loud noise in workplaces, in traffic, at home, in entertainment venues as well as through personal audio devices.
- Our risk of hearing loss depends on intensity of sound, duration, and frequency of exposure to loud noise.
- Exposure to loud noise exceeding the amount that can be tolerated by sensory cells within your ears can gradually result in temporary or permanent hearing loss.

Can you reverse hearing loss?

- Tinnitus (ringing in the ears) that occurs following exposure to loud sound at entertainment venues such as concerts and sports usually recovers within a short time.
- Regular, lengthy exposure to loud sound can damage sensory cells and result in permanent hearing loss which is known to have no cure.
- Avoiding exposure to loud noise at the onset of warning signs can prevent the progression of hearing loss.

How can I ensure safe listening?

- Limiting the daily use of personal audio devices
- Reducing the listening volume and duration of listening when listening using earphones/ headphones.
- Wearing ear plugs when visiting noisy places
- Limiting the time spent at noisy places; reducing the frequency of visits to noisy places; taking short breaks to allow ears to rest
- Getting regular ear care check ups
- Avoiding the use of personal audio devices on the days you attend events where there is loud noise
- Listening at a level of 80 dB for 40 hours per week helps in safe listening.

Early warning signs of hearing loss

- Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
- Difficulty in:
 1. hearing high pitched sound
 - a. e.g.: doorbells, telephone
 2. hearing conversations in noisy environments
 - a. e.g.: markets, restaurants, social gatherings
 3. understanding speech especially over the phone

Hearing loss is widely prevalent health condition of diverse aetiology, affecting individuals across the life course.

KEY FACTS

- It is said that globally one in five people live with hearing loss and by 2050, it is expected that one in four people will be found to have hearing problems.
- Nearly 80% of those with hearing loss live in low- middle-income countries, where services for ear and hearing care are commonly lacking.
- Hearing loss affects communication, cognition, mental health, language and speech development, employment, and interpersonal relationships
- Many common causes of hearing loss can prevent especially noise
- Over 1 billion young people are at risk of recreational loud noise induced permanent hearing loss

Role of a parent in safe listening

- Educating the children on safe listening and monitoring their daily noise exposure
- Be a role model

Role of a teacher in safe listening

- Educating the students on possible dangers of exposure to loud sounds
- Encouraging safe listening habits.

Role of a manager at workplaces, where loud noise is inevitable

- Displaying awareness messages on safe listening
- Elimination of loud noise source
- Substitution of loud noise source
- Engineering control such as enclosure or isolation of the loud noise source
- Administrative control such as worker rotation
- Provision of personal protective equipment to workers such as ear plugs and ensuring proper usage

Loud noise induced hearing loss can be PERMANENT but PREVENTABLE

