



## PLAY IT SAFE WITH YOUR EARS

### EXPERT TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR HEARING WHEN RECREATION GETS NOISY

*Tomorrow marks the 2015 International Ear Care Day. Focus is put on teenagers and young adults exposed to “dangerous decibels” in their leisure time: the unsafe use of personal audio devices, but also discotheques, nightclubs and sports venues where deafening sound levels pose a serious threat to hearing.*

*Milan, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 – Turn the volume down on your MP3 player and smartphone so you can hear surrounding sounds, take **15 minute breaks every 90 minutes** in discotheques and wear **ear protection** at very noisy events like sports matches and concerts. These are just some of the tips from **Amplifon’s mini-guide “Play It Safe with Your Ears”**, produced on the occasion of **International Ear Care Day 2015**. This year’s initiative promoted by the World Health Organization stresses the link between noisy leisure pastimes popular among young people and the possible risks to hearing. It is no coincidence that one in five teenagers now complains of hearing problems, with a 30% rise in figures in the last 15 years. The culprit, experts claim, is the widespread use of personal audio devices such as MP3 players and smartphone, but also damaging levels of sound in many discotheques and pubs, in addition to deafening noise during some sporting events. In fact, noisy entertainment puts in jeopardy the hearing ability of over 1 billion teenagers and young adults around the world, signals the WHO.*

*“Listening to music through headphones or spending a lot of time in noisy discotheques and pubs are popular recreational activities especially among youngsters. These leisure activities are enjoyable, but without due care they can have negative consequences on hearing. Loud music can reach 120 decibels going beyond the noise tolerance threshold with the risk of severe hearing loss as demonstrated by many clinical and epidemiological studies”, explains **professor Antonio Cesarani, Director of the Audiology Complex Operative Unit of Fondazione IRCCS Ca’ Granda Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico in Milan and president of the Italian Society of Audiology and Phoniatrics (Società Italiana di Audiologia e Foniatria - SIAF).***

*“Young people don’t have to give up music or spending time with their friends – adds **professor Cesarani** – they just need to follow a few tips. For example, it is a good idea to turn the volume down on smartphones and reduce the amount of time spent listening to music uninterruptedly on MP3 players to 2 hours a day. When you’re in a discotheque or noisy nightclub, keep to the so-called ‘in & out rule’, taking a 15 minute break every 90 minutes. When leaving a nightclub, youngsters may feel as if their ears were clogged or obstructed, accompanied by noise or whistles (named tinnitus): whenever these symptoms last for more than 16 hours spent in absence of noise, it’s advisable to pay a visit to a medical clinic to check one’s hearing. Lastly and generally speaking, when you notice hearing related discomfort after too much noise exposure get your hearing checked. A hearing test only lasts a few minutes and can detect hearing difficulties in order to find the best solution to the problem”.*



Hearing loss affects **590 million people worldwide, 7 million in Italy alone**. It is more common in the elderly due to natural ageing of the hearing system. **More than 40% of people aged 60-69 years have significant hearing loss** and the annual incidence rises to 90% over the age of 80 years. Nonetheless, **younger people** can also suffer hearing loss. Unsafe behaviour such as the excessive use of personal audio devices, but also exposure to loud noise or music at high volume in night clubs, sports venues and discotheques can impair hearing at an earlier age. Music, for example, can exceed the threshold of **120 decibels (pain threshold)** and may sometimes rise to a peak of 150 decibels, when noise should not exceed 90-95 decibels. Excessive sound levels can damage the hair cells in the inner ear causing them to vibrate intensely until they break off and die.

### **“PLAY IT SAFE WITH YOUR EARS” MINI-GUIDE**

Produced by Amplifon with the advice of professor Antonio Cesarani, president of the Italian Society of Audiology and Phoniatics (Società Italiana di Audiologia e Foniatria - SIAF): tips on how to listen to music and enjoy yourself without putting your hearing at risk.

1. **Turn the volume down on your personal audio devices** so you can hear surrounding voices and noise.
2. **Reduce the amount of time spent listening to music uninterruptedly on MP3 players to no longer than 2 hours a day**
3. Don't use headphones or earphones for **prolonged periods of time**.
4. Adopt the so-called **“in & out rule”**: in a noisy place like a discotheque or during a concert, take a **15 minute break every 90 minutes** to give your ears a rest.
5. Don't go too close to **loud speakers** in discotheques and pubs or at a concert.
6. When leaving a nightclub – if you feel as if your ears were clogged or obstructed, accompanied by noise or whistles (named tinnitus), for longer than 16 hours spent in absence of noise - it's advisable to pay a visit to a medical clinic to check your hearing.
7. Wear **ear protection** in particularly noisy places such as sporting venues and concerts.
8. Have a **hearing check** in case of recurrent hearing related discomfort.

*The **Amplifon Group** is the world leader in the distribution and personalized fitting of hearing aids and correlated hearing care services. With its direct and indirect network of 3,300 points of sale, more than 3,200 service centres and 2,000 affiliate shops, Amplifon is present in Italy, France, the Netherlands, Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Hungary, Egypt, Turkey, Poland, Israel, the USA, Brazil, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and India.*



**For more information**

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