



## Southern Vermont AUDIOLOGY

*total hearing solutions*



# DID YOU HEAR?

## How to Hear the Sounds of the Season with Hearing Loss

The holidays are a great time of year to spend with friends and family that you may not see much of during the rest of the year. It's during this time that lots of reconnecting happens and that usually means lots of conversation. Unfortunately, if you or a loved one suffers from hearing loss, this joyous time can become stressful and isolating. Here are some tips and ideas to help you enjoy the holiday season.



**Stay close to a partner or friend.** By having your spouse or friend nearby, they can assist during group conversations. They can help with repeating something you may have missed the first time it was said.

**Try to focus on one-on-one conversations when possible.** It can be difficult for a person with hearing loss to take part in group conversations when people are constantly talking over one another. Instead, when possible try to keep conversations to just one person at a time.

**Wear your hearing aids consistently.** The more you wear your hearing aids in all situations (even at home by yourself) the better you will hear when you find yourself in a complicated listening environment.

**Breaks can help.** It's okay to take a break from all the noise and action coming from a group setting in order to give your ears and brain a breather. By stepping out of the conversation into a quieter setting for a moment, you can help clear your head and re-energize for the next round of being social.

*Inquire about  
new rechargeable  
battery technology.  
Promises to make life  
easier for hearing  
aid consumers.*

# Woodstock Generation Feeling the Consequences of Decades of Loud Music

A just released Harris Poll Survey on the hard rocking Woodstock Generation has some important messages about hearing health that can benefit people of all ages. The new study demonstrates the far-reaching consequences of loud music listening on hearing health. Fifty years ago, many believed that turning up the volume and seeking out concerts with the biggest speakers contributed to enjoyment. Today, we know the long-term effects of noise on hearing health and the importance of protecting hearing to maintain not only the ability to enjoy the music and conversation but overall quality of life.

Noise above 85 decibels, about the level of heavy traffic or a gas lawn mower, can contribute to hearing loss, and loud music is no exception. The National Institute of Deafness estimates that 15% of Americans between ages 20 and 69 have high frequency hearing loss that may have been caused by exposure to loud noise from workplace or leisure activities.

The Harris Poll surveyed more than 1,000 US adults, ages 65-80, the Woodstock Generation, about music listening habits in their youth and their ability to hear and enjoy music today. Below is what was revealed.



## ROCK N' ROLL TUNES DON'T SOUND LIKE THEY USED TO

**36%**

report their hearing loss now negatively impacts their ability to listen to music at least a little

**70%**

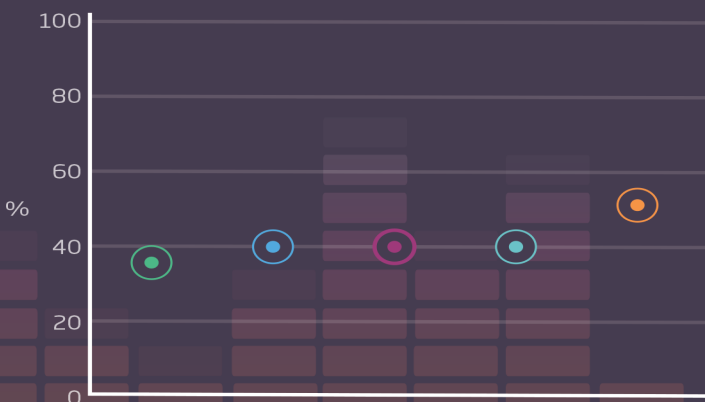
who report hearing loss wish they could still experience music the way they did when they were young

**47%**

of those with hearing loss say they don't enjoy music as much as they used to



## Say what? Woodstock Generation's hearing isn't what it used to be



**52%** have difficulty understanding what is being said in loud environments like busy restaurants at least sometimes

**40%** have needed statements repeated in conversations at least sometimes

**40%** have missed words in a conversation at least sometimes

**41%** say hearing loss negatively impacts their ability to participate in social activities/gatherings at least a little

**38%** say hearing loss impacts relationships with family or friends at least a little

## 13-Year Old Scientist's Research Shows Hand Dryers Can Hurt Kids' Ears

Hand dryers are prevalent in public restrooms, but according to research recently published in the Canadian Journal Paediatrics & Child Health, the noise they make may be harmful to children's ears. And the author of this study can speak from experience.

"Sometimes after using hand dryers my ears would start ringing," 13-year old Nora Keegan from Calgary, Canada, tells NPR. "I also noticed that children would not want to use hand dryers, and they'd be covering their ears." When Nora was 9 years old, she decided to test the volume of hand dryers and find out if they were detrimental to children's hearing. Nora's research, confirming her hypothesis, was published in June.

"Hand dryers are actually really, really loud, and especially at children's heights since they're so close to where the air comes out," says Nora, noting that children's ears are more sensitive. The study was conducted between 2015 and 2017, and Nora visited more than 40 public washrooms in Alberta, Canada. She used a professional decibel meter to measure sound levels of hand dryers from various heights and distances.



The young scientist then presented her research at a Calgary Youth Science Fair in 2018. She discovered that Xlerator hand dryers and two types of Dyson Airblade hand dryers posed the greatest threats to children's hearing. These types all exceeded 100 decibels -- a volume that can lead to "learning disabilities, attention difficulties, and ruptured ear drums," according to the study. "My loudest measurement was 121 decibels from a Dyson Airblade model," she says. "And, this is not good because Health Canada doesn't allow toys for children to be sold over 100 decibels, as they know that they can damage children's hearing."

In response to these results, Dyson confirmed to NPR in an email that an acoustics engineer would be meeting with Nora to discuss her research. Excel Dryer's, the company that sells Xlerator hand dryers, response stated they are committed to their customers and user experience is very important to them, which is why all our high-speed, energy-efficient models come with adjustable sound and speed controls as a standard feature. This allows facilities the ability to choose the best settings for their restroom environments.

"While some other units operated at low sound levels, many units were louder at children's ear heights than at adult ear heights," the study concludes. Nora hopes her findings will spark more research into the issue and eventually lead Canada to regulate noise levels for hand dryers.



### Patient Corner



*At 57 years old I never really thought I would wear hearing aids. But as I looked honestly at where I was missing out on conversations, insights and funny moments with friends and family, I realized that I would really benefit from them. After candid conversations with Dr. Lowkes, I made the decision to give them a try and so very thankful that I did. No longer do I have to miss out on what is being said nor do I feel embarrassed at having to regularly say "what did you say?" And when friends and family have noticed I'm wearing them and I explain why, they all say "good for you." Indeed - it is good for me!*

# Wax Guards! Wax Guards! Wax Guards!

## Why and when to change the wax guards on your hearing aids

Wax guards/filters offer built-in protection from ear wax and other debris. The wax guard serves the important purpose of preventing wax from entering the electronics of the hearing aid. If your hearing aid has a wax guard/filter, inspect it daily for debris. **The wax guard is often located under the plastic dome.**

Wax guards/filters are designed to be easily removed by the user but because they are so small, it can be difficult for some. Because sound exits through this part of the hearing aid, if it becomes clogged with ear wax, it can muffle the sound or shut the hearing aid down completely. Be sure to change these filters as needed. Some people need to change them more often than others!



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