



## IN THIS ISSUE:

Lesser Known Causes of Hearing Loss

Sports and Hearing – How to Protect Yourself

Emergency Preparedness

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Let us know how we are doing by taking this short survey. 

## LISTEN UP! IS YOUR LIFESTYLE RUINING YOUR HEARING?

BY MICHELE MICHAELS, HARD OF HEARING SPECIALIST, ARIZONA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND THE HARD OF HEARING

If you think hearing loss is just an age-related problem, think again. According to the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, there are more than 55 million people in the United States currently experiencing some degree of hearing loss, and most are under the age of 65.

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## HEARING LOSS AND SPORTS DON'T LET BEING A SPORTS FAN DAMAGE YOUR HEARING

Cheering fans, loud whistles -- they might seem harmless at the time but did you know the noises at sporting events can potentially damage your hearing?

Today, there are more than one million adults across the country who report having a hearing-related disability, and its estimated one in five teens has some degree of hearing loss.

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## Upcoming Events

**Prescott Senior Connection & Resource Expo**  
March 14, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Yavapai Community College  
1100 E. Sheldon St  
Prescott, AZ 86301

**Brain Injury Alliance Arizona BBQ & Expo**  
March 15, 10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
Disability Empowerment Center  
Conference Room 1 & 2  
5025 E. Washington St  
Phoenix, AZ 85034

**Chandler Senior Expo**  
March 19, 9 a.m. – noon  
Chandler Community Center  
125 East Commonwealth Ave  
Chandler, AZ 85244

**Health, Wellness and Beauty Expo**  
March 22, noon – 4 p.m.  
Doubletree Paradise Valley Resort  
5401 N. Scottsdale Rd  
Scottsdale, AZ 85250

**Women's Life and Style Expo**  
March 22, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
March 23, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Hotel Tucson-City Center  
475 N. Granada  
Tucson, AZ 85701

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# LISTEN UP! IS YOUR LIFESTYLE RUINING YOUR HEARING?

CONTINUED FROM COVER



**Michele Michaels,**  
*Hard of Hearing  
Specialist, Arizona  
Commission for the  
Deaf and the Hard  
of Hearing*

Every day our ears are exposed to different environments and other lifestyle factors, all of which over time can affect a person's hearing. The most common causes of hearing loss are exposure to loud noises and ageing, but there are other influences that can have an impact as well.

## A FEW LESSER KNOWN OFFENDERS:

### Seasonal allergies

Spring will be here before you know it, so make sure your seasonal allergies don't get in the way of your hearing. According to health experts, when individuals with allergies are exposed to high pollen levels, they can become susceptible to inner ear swelling and increased fluid in the ear which can cause a temporary conductive hearing loss.

### Obesity or excessive weight gain

Living with an unhealthy weight can cause a variety of health issues, but did you know it can also impair your hearing too? According to a recent study published by the Laryngoscope, there is a direct link between obesity and hearing loss in teenagers. The study surveyed 1,488 teenage boys and girls and found that teenagers who are obese are nearly twice as likely to suffer from low-frequency hearing loss in one ear.

### Smoking tobacco

There are a dozen reasons why you should kick this habit already, but now researchers are warning that smoking can affect your hearing too. Nicotine causes blood vessels to constrict and shrink, including the blood vessels that bring blood and oxygen to the inner ear. The lack of adequate blood flow can suffocate the cochlea, resulting in hearing loss.

And if that isn't enough, health experts say there is another common product used by individuals every day that may leave you hearing less -- pain killers and other ototoxic medications.

According to a study in the American Journal of Epidemiology, taking ibuprofen or acetaminophen more than 2 days per week increases a woman's chances of having a hearing loss. (The use of analgesics and hearing loss in men has already been established.)

The ear is a delicate structure and should be treated with care. Many people may be surprised to learn how sensitive the ear is to loud noise. To aid in the prevention of noise-induced hearing loss, the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing recommends the following:

- \* Compared to other routine health checks, our hearing can often be overlooked. Make an appointment to get your hearing checked with a hearing healthcare professional.
- \* Wear hearing protection when you can. This includes when you're working in a loud environment, such as an airport or a construction site or when using power tools like a leaf blower or power saw. Consider the long-term effects of the noise from a hairdryer or food blender on your hearing.
- \* Be careful when cleaning out your ears. Many people think cleaning out your ears regularly is a good thing. While it's important to keep a healthy ear canal, too much probing can actually do more harm than good. Never stick anything into your ear canal, as even a cotton swab can damage the ear canal or eardrum.
- \* With so many causes of hearing loss, it's important to protect your hearing around-the-clock. Taking the necessary steps to prevent hearing loss in your everyday lives will help prevent long term hearing related issues for the future.

For more information visit:

[www.acdhh.org/services/hard\\_of\\_hearing](http://www.acdhh.org/services/hard_of_hearing)



## HEARING LOSS AND SPORTS DON'T LET BEING A SPORTS FAN DAMAGE YOUR HEARING

**CONTINUED FROM COVER**

Springtime in Arizona brings a lot of excitement with various sporting activities. From Spring Training to NASCAR, health experts worry that whistles, loud cheering and other noise associated with sporting events may be doing more harm than good.

### **I'M A SPORTS FAN, AM I AT RISK?**

Everyone who attends sporting events is at potential risk for experiencing hearing loss. Just take the 2014 Super Bowl for example. According to an official from the Guinness Book of World Records who was at the event, they recorded the noise level at 137.6 decibels. That is roughly 52 decibels over the maximum level of noise exposure. But keep in mind, this kind of noise exposure danger isn't just found at football games, fans attending any sporting event are at risk.

### **HOW DO I KNOW IF I MAY BE DAMAGING MY HEARING?**

After exposure to loud noise you may experience one or more of the following:

- \* Ringing or buzzing in the ears
- \* Slight muffling of sounds
- \* Difficulty in understanding speech. You can hear all the words, but you can't understand them.
- \* Difficulty in hearing conversation in groups of people when there is background noise, or in rooms with poor acoustics.

If you experience any of these early warnings signs, your hearing may have been damaged. Have your hearing checked by an audiologist, or have your ears examined by an ear specialist.

### **SO, WHAT CAN FANS DO?**

You don't have to stop going to sporting events, you just have to take preventative measures to make sure you keep your ears safe.

According to Jessie Atencio at the Arizona Department of Occupational Safety and Health (ADOSH) thousands of workers every year suffer from preventable hearing loss due to high workplace noise levels. To safely enjoy sports, ADOSH requires employees to wear hearing protection and fans should wear protective wear to help protect their hearing as well.

In general a person can safely listen to an 85 decibel (dB) sound, which is a normal everyday conversation, for 8 hours straight without any hearing damage. While most sporting events don't last eight hours, their level of noise we know typically exceeds the recommended level. So, if you know you are going to be at a sporting event do the following to help preserve your hearing:

- \* Use ear plugs. Carrying a pair of ear plugs to use at sporting events is a great way to ensure the safety of your hearing. The plugs create a barrier between your ear and the noise, allowing you to enjoy your event at a safe noise level.
- \* Hearing protectors are also a great option. Unlike ear plugs, hearing protectors can be made to custom fit your ears so they fit comfortably.

The next time you go to a sporting event, remember to protect your hearing. Your ears will thank you.

# A LESSON IN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

BY ARIZONA RELAY SERVICE

Emergencies can happen anywhere and at any time, and many times individuals can be unprepared for these unexpected situations, Members of the Deaf and hard of hearing Community face many challenges, but protecting themselves during an emergency should not be one of them.

## SO, WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

The time to prepare for an emergency is before it happens. Having a communications plan in place before the emergencies happen will ensure deaf and hard of hearing individuals know how to respond.

### A communications plan should include:

- \* Knowing how to communicate with emergency personnel if there is no interpreter or if you don't have your hearing aids. Store paper and pens for this purpose.
- \* Creating an emergency card to carry with you that has important messages on it such as "I use American Sign Language (ASL) and need an ASL interpreter," or "I do not write or read English."

Aside from having a proper communications plan in place make sure you have the right tools that allow you to communicate the way you need to and receive the most up-to-date-information.

Make sure to store extra batteries for your hearing equipment. This includes both hearing aids and implants. Doing so will ensure that in an emergency you have the tools you need to properly hear what is going on and communicate with others.

### Other suggestions include:

- \* Keep your pager, captioned telephone and other communication equipment charged.
- \* Maintain batteries and store extras for your TTY and other communications equipment. Check the owner's manual for proper battery maintenance.
- \* If possible, get a battery-operated television that has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports.
- \* Determine which broadcasting systems will provide continuous captioned and/or signed news.

## I HAVE THE TOOLS AND A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN IN PLACE, NOW WHAT?

From haboobs to flash floods and heat waves to power outages, getting adequate access to services is imperative so you can deal with an emergency and recover from it.

If you experience a situation where you lose power or can't access a traditional land line, use your TTY service or text telephone for emergency assistance. The TTY service does not require internet or for you to have telephone services in your home. Instead, it operates on batteries and uses a LAN line to help get you connected to local emergency services.

Don't be caught off guard the next time you have an emergency. Get prepared and have a working emergency preparedness plan that will ensure that you and your family are safe.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MARCH

#### Prescott Senior Connection & Resource Expo

March 14, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Yavapai Community College  
1100 E. Sheldon St  
Prescott, AZ 86301

#### Brain Injury Alliance Arizona BBQ & Expo

March 15, 10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
Disability Empowerment Center  
Conference Room 1 & 2  
5025 E. Washington St  
Phoenix, AZ 85034

#### Chandler Senior Expo

March 19, 9 a.m. – noon  
Chandler Community Center  
125 East Commonwealth Ave  
Chandler, AZ 85244

#### Phoenix Suns Game

March 19, 7 p.m.  
US Airways Center  
201 E Jefferson St  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

#### Phoenix Suns Game

March 21, 7 p.m.  
US Airways Center  
201 E Jefferson St  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

#### Health, Wellness and Beauty Expo

March 22, noon – 4 p.m.  
Doubletree Paradise Valley Resort  
5401 N. Scottsdale Rd  
Scottsdale, AZ 85250

#### Women's Life and Style Expo

March 22, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
March 23, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Hotel Tucson-City Center  
475 N. Granada  
Tucson, AZ 85701

#### Sunny Slope Senior Center Health Fair

March 24, 8 a.m. - noon  
Sunny Slope Senior Center  
802 E. Vogel Ave  
Phoenix, AZ 85020

#### Paradise Valley Senior Center Community Health Fair

March 26, 8 a.m. - noon  
Paradise Valley Senior Center  
17402 N. 40th St  
Phoenix, AZ 85032

#### East Valley Adult Resource Spring Health Fair

March 27, 9 a.m. - noon  
Red Mountain Active Adult Center  
7550 E Adobe St  
Mesa, AZ 85207

#### 10th Annual American Indian Disability Summit

March 27-28, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Phoenix Airport Marriot  
1101 North 44th St  
Phoenix, AZ 85008

#### Phoenix Suns Game

March 28, 7 p.m.  
US Airways Center  
201 E Jefferson St  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

#### Red Mountain Active Adult Center Car Show and Community Fair

March 29, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
Red Mountain Multi-Generational Center  
7550 E Adobe St  
Mesa, AZ 85207

### APRIL

#### Phoenix Suns Game

April 2, 7 p.m.  
US Airways Center  
201 E Jefferson St  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

#### Arizona Health and Fitness Expo

April 5 - 6, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Phoenix Convention Center  
100 N. 3rd St  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

#### Phoenix Suns Game

April 6, 6 p.m.  
US Airways Center  
201 E Jefferson St  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

#### Mesa 2014 Transition Expo

April 8, 5 – 8 p.m.  
Mountain View High School  
2700 E. Brown Rd  
Mesa, AZ 85213

#### 54th Annual AZ Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention

April 11-12, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Resort  
10000 North Oracle Rd  
Tucson, AZ 85704

#### 2014 NBHC Multicultural Music Festival and Expo

April 12, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Peoria Osuna Park  
10510 83rd Ave  
Peoria, AZ 85345

#### AzGS Spring Geriatric Mental Health & Aging Conference

April 16, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Black Canyon Conference Center  
9440 N 25th Ave  
Phoenix, AZ 85021

#### ALFA 2014 Annual Conference & Expo

April 20-22, 7 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Radisson Fort McDowell Resort  
10438 N Fort McDowell Rd  
Scottsdale/Fountain Hills, AZ 85264

#### Easter Seals of South West Human Development 'Walk with Me'

April 26, 6 a.m. – noon  
Steele Indian School Park  
300 E. Indian School Rd  
Phoenix, Arizona 85012

#### My Health and Wellness Expo

April 26, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Tucson  
445 S Alvernon Way  
Tucson, Arizona 85711

#### AZ Ultimate Women's Expo

April 26 - 27, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Phoenix Convention Center  
100 N 3rd St  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

### MAY

#### YMCA Marathon and Health Expo

May 2, 3 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
May 3, 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
Prescott YMCA  
750 Whipple St  
Prescott, AZ 86301

#### DEC Health & Wellness Fair

May 2, noon – 5 p.m.  
May 3, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Disability Empowerment Center  
5025 E. Washington St  
Phoenix, AZ 85034

#### Summit Healthcare Annual Community Health Fair

May 31, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Flagstaff Athletic Club East Gym  
3200 N. Country Club Drive  
Flagstaff, AZ 86004