

Headphones harm listeners' hearing

Length of time, decibel level and type of device contribute to damage

Alicia Collins
Staff Reporter

Students resorting to their iPods to block daily background noise could experience permanent hearing loss.

Kelly Burchett, a local osteopathic doctor, said the amount of time and the level at which people listen to their music affects the amount of hearing they could lose. This is especially true with the standard iPod headphones, which are inserted directly into the ear canal, he said.

"The music you listen to now, you will pay for later," he said. "Hearing damage done at an early age will be compounded, and patients will then experience hearing loss later in life."

Listening to loud noises, such as that from headphones, damages the inner hair cells in the ear, resulting in hearing loss, Burchett said.

"Hearing damage is a lot like sun damage," he said. "The majority of the damage is caused before the age of 18, but the effects of an individual's actions won't be seen until midlife or even later because the higher pitches are the first ones lost, and no one notices."

It is very important to be aware of just how loud the noise is that you are exposing yourself to, Burchett said.

"The amount of noise needed to cause hearing loss is different for each person but is dangerous for everyone at a certain point," he said.

Burchett said the Occupational Safety and Health Association publishes occupational noise standards



Sophomore Patrick Rembecki listens to headphones while working on a computer in Ophelia Parrish.

and how long a person can be exposed to those noises before hearing damage will occur.

A rock concert at 120 decibels can cause damage within seven and a half minutes.

"When a person is exposed to loud impulses of music, such as a rock concert, they experience ringing in their ears, which is a reversible hearing loss known as a temporary threshold shift," Burchett said.

Typical headphones range from 91 to 120 decibels, and those that fit into the ear increase the volume by seven to nine decibels, according to the Sight and Ear Association.

"Hearing protection is extremely important when you're exposed to any prolonged noise, and there are many types of earplugs available," he said.

Freshman Becca Landwehr said she is addicted to her iPod, and she

walks to class, studies and falls asleep to it, which adds up to nearly five hours every day.

"I feel the need for constant use of it because it's a way to listen to my music, and I love music and always have," she said. "I can't be doing anything without music."

Landwehr said that even though she constantly uses her iPod, she does not think she has the volume set at dangerous levels.

"I listen to it really softly when I'm going to sleep, and when I'm walking around I listen to it just loud enough to where if I meet someone, I can just take one earpiece out and talk to them," she said.

Sophomore Kelly Albright, on the other hand, said she has experienced a temporary threshold shift by simply using her iPod earphones.

"When I'm at home I play the

drums to my iPod, and I turn the volume up nearly all the way," she said. "I have experienced ringing, but luckily I don't do it that often."

Like Landwehr, Albright said she uses her iPod walking to and from class as a way to block unwanted noise, even drowning out the lawn mowers around campus.

"I just think that the earphones are better quality than the headphones," she said. "It makes me think the music is coming directly from my head, and I love it."

Both students were aware that prolonged use of their earphones could cause permanent hearing loss, yet neither said they were very worried.

"I think if it were really serious I may turn down the volume a little, but otherwise I don't think it's going to harm me that much," Albright said.

Student offers health advice

The weather has become cooler, the days are getting shorter, and school is moving into full swing. The writing assignment given a month ago is now due in a few days, and it is about time to begin. Most brilliant ideas come at 3 a.m. and are fueled by coffee and a looming deadline, right? Besides, this weekend is going to involve very little schoolwork and large amounts of socializing. College is about balancing academics, athletics and "other" activities.

School isn't just about learning calculus, for which I still have yet to find a use. The only calculus I remember is X cubed equals a terrible Vin Diesel flick. About as important are the breeding cycles of ferns, fruit flies or fungi.

Of course, if you're a scientist or Ken Jennings, the best Jeopardy! player ever, everything is important.

After an active summer about this time in my undergraduate career, I was a few more pounds into my college weight. The only thing I remember about literature is that Frankenstein is not the name of the monster in the book. Seriously, who knew?

I remember the top three parties I attended. I remember watching as my roommate's towel was taken while he was in the shower. This was a firsthand experience of Newton's first law. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. To sum it up, stolen towel equals a naked person running through the residence hall, in which speed times nakedness gives a large amount of momentum.

So, you've learned a little bit more about me, and I have not introduced myself. My name is Nate Rohling, and I am a second-year student at the A.T. Still University of Health Sciences. I am originally from the cold state of Minnesota, where I attended a liberal arts college, Gustavus Adolphus College. I was involved in athletics in four of those years and finished with my bachelor's in five years. I also was an EMT and worked for the local ambulance service. I took a semester off to work in Salt Lake City during the Olympics in 2002. For the prelaw students, I am not a physician. I am not able to practice medicine here in Missouri or anywhere for that matter. Things written in this column are for informational purposes only, and any health matters should be discussed with your physician. For the law students, I really mean it, you need to talk to your doctor about any concerns you might have regarding your health and before starting any exercise or weight-loss



Nate Rohling
Medical Student

program. Yes, this includes the Atkins and South Beach diets.

As a medical student, the curriculum involves one year of sciences, which are the foundation for understanding the pathological changes involved in disease and altered health states. The sciences also help reinforce the reasons for testing, treating and performing procedures. The second year of school is dedicated to the clinical side of medicine. Most patients who come to

“Thanks to the wonders of the Internet, you can send me your questions regarding any medical or health issue, and I'll give you a straight-up answer.”

a clinic or hospital have no idea how or why antibiotics kill bacteria or the different types of bacteria involved with infections. It is the physician's

responsibility to use his or her knowledge to make an informed decision regarding a successful treatment for the patient's disease. I have not learned everything I need to know. However, as a second-year, I have a large knowledge base and the resources to find out the correct answer.

With all these lessons learned, it is important to learn about yourself and health.

I worked for the ambulance in my undergraduate town and frequently was called at 3 a.m. to see if it were possible to smoke too much pot, drink too much alcohol or get a girl pregnant through anal sex. What does this all mean? Should you call me at 3 a.m.? Absolutely not.

So, what was I rambling on about in the previous sentences? Here it is: Thanks to the wonders of the Internet, you can send me your questions regarding any medical or health issue, and I'll give you a straight-up answer. All of this is printed for you to read at your leisure before bed, using the toilet or whenever you should want.

To those of you who are still wondering if you can smoke too much pot or get a girl pregnant through anal sex, you'll just have to keep reading, and all your questions will be answered.

So send them in to sld412@truman.edu.

Until next week, you stay classy, Truman State.

Bottled water fans miss fluoride

People who don't drink tap water might be susceptible to cavities

Alicia Collins
Staff Reporter

A residence hall room littered with empty water bottles could be an indicator of an increased possibility for cavities.

Jessica Quint, a local dentist, said research, like that provided by the American Dental Association, shows a correlation between bottled water and cavities as a result of bottled water's lack of fluoride found in tap water.

"The only bottled water that I know of that contains fluoride is Dannon," Quint said. "So people who are drinking bottled water instead of tap water for whatever reason are not receiving the benefits of the fluoride."

She said research has shown fluoride reduces cavities in both children and adults and also helps repair the early stages of tooth decay even before the decay becomes visible.

"Bottled water is not bad," Quint said. "People just need to be informed that it doesn't have fluoride, so they are able to find fluoride in other products such as toothpaste or fluoride rinses."

Quint said the outside of the tooth is originally made of hydroxyapatite, but the fluoridation of water turns some of it into fluorapatite, which is actu-

ally stronger and more successful at preventing tooth decay.

People in cities with fluoridation in their water systems have a lower rate of tooth decay, and it is especially important that children receive the proper amount of fluoride because their teeth are still developing, Quint said.

Those who drink bottled water are not the only ones at risk because water that is filtered through reverse-osmosis faucets or refrigerators that also lacks fluoride, Quint said.

"It is still being debated whether the benefits of fluoride come from the mineral being ingested or from the direct contact with the teeth, but either way it is necessary to prevent decay," she said.

Quint said the No. 1 thing an individual can do to prevent cavities is to see a dentist every six months because he or she will notice if an increase in fluoride is needed.

In an informational Index survey of 50 students on campus, nearly 75 percent reported buying bottled water instead of drinking the tap water because of a taste preference or as a health precaution.

John Dahlman, manager of the Missouri Hall cafeteria, said students have two options of water with their meals.

"We receive Kirksville tap water from the University Physical Plant and bottled water from Pepsi-Cola, so students can make



Freshman Nicole Suit stretches at the Student Recreation Center.

their own decision," he said.

Freshman Liz Morrey said she goes through a 24-pack of water every week and even more in the summer.

"My mom is really big into health things, so I started drinking it because of her, but overall I think it tastes better," she said.

Studies about chemicals in tap water leading to cancer and other diseases also encourage Morrey to drink bottled water, she said.

"The water from the fountains at my high school used to come out different colors and really gross me out, and I just feel as if bottled water is safer to drink," she said.

Morrey said she was shocked to discover that bottled water might lead to cavities because of its lack of fluoride.

"I started drinking more bottled water because I am a runner, and I wanted to be drinking better water," she said. "I never knew it could lead to cavities, but now I want to research it further."

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