



# THE LOOP

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association  
British Columbia Chapter

Issue 35

Spring 2008

## Be an Ambassador at the Congress 2008

Are you planning to attend the CHHA/IFHOH conference this July?

We hope you are, and we are hoping that you will want to sign up to be an ambassador as part of our **Ambassador Program**.

This means you will extend a special welcome to someone who is a visitor from another country.

You will be the person they can connect with during the Congress to ask such questions as “Where is the nearest bank?” “What is a good restaurant nearby?” etc. If your assigned visitor has a lot of questions, you may want to meet for coffee.

You will be a friendly face – someone who can answer general questions about Vancouver, British Columbia and, perhaps, Canada. If you don’t know the answer to their questions, you may direct them to the Congress Registration Desk.

As an Ambassador, you will not be expected to spend any money to participate in this program.



**And we are sure you will greatly enjoy the experience of extending a special welcome to at least one person visiting Canada.**

You are invited to let me know if you would like to be part of this welcoming program. During the Congress, your name tag will indicate this, and at the Opening Reception on Wednesday, July 2nd, you will be given the opportunity to meet with your international guest.

Please contact me so I can put you on the list for the **Ambassador Program**.

Email: [lyndahepworth@shaw.ca](mailto:lyndahepworth@shaw.ca)

Phone: 604-731-4433

Lynda Hepworth

## An Interview with Ruth Warick,

General Secretary of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH)  
and Disability Adviser at the University of British Columbia  
by Karina Chupina



*Karina Chupina, Marcel Bobeldijk  
President of the European Federation of  
Hard of Hearing People, and Ruth Warick*

**On the eve of the upcoming international Congress for hard of hearing people, *A Global Community of Communications*, that will take place in Vancouver on July 2-7 this year, I wanted to better understand hearing loss and hard of hearing identity in Canada in my conversation with Ruth.**

**Karina:** Is there a difference in relating to hearing loss in Canada and the US, two neighbouring countries? If so, what is this difference?

**Ruth:** Hearing loss is similar in many industrialized countries in terms of its impact, both on functional ability to participate and communicate and to be a member of society, and on the implications for one's identity. There are also similarities in terms of technological, health, and education supports.

Of course, each person is an individual, so personal differences must be considered along with gender, social class, racial background, and other factors. There are also differences related to culture from one's environment and family background. *(See p.3.)*

### B.C. COCHLEAR IMPLANT REUNION

The B.C. Cochlear Implant group holds a reunion in Vancouver every fourth year, and this year will hold it on the evening of Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, at the Sheraton Wall Centre.

Sponsored by Cochlear Corp., the reunion is open to people with cochlear implants, potential candidates, or anyone with a particular interest in cochlear implants.

Since we are holding the reunion in conjunction with the CHHA/IFHOH CONGRESS, we are also inviting international delegates to attend. There is no registration fee but, if you plan to attend, please RSVP to [marilyndahl@telus.net](mailto:marilyndahl@telus.net) or by postal mail to 546 – 1515 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6J5C5

Marilyn Dahl

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for  
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**July 2 – 6, 2008.**

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  - *LISTENÉCOUTE* (National publication)
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Please send to the Vancouver Foundation, Suite 1200, 555 Hastings Street, Box 12132, Harbour Centre, Vancouver, BC, V6B 4N6. The Vancouver Foundation will issue receipts for all gifts.

**Interest from capital is used in perpetuity for CHHA-BC Chapter.**  
**The capital remains intact.**

## From the President . . .

### Happy New Year !

**The CHHA/IFHOH Congress is less than four months away.**

Over the course of three days and four evenings you will enjoy an Opening Reception, a Silent Auction, a Gala Banquet, entertainment, and a vast selection of workshops, panels, and poster sessions all pertaining to numerous issues around being hard of hearing.

The Keynote Speakers promise to be of broad interest to the delegates, and the Trade Show will provide new technology to interest us.

To get all the information on the Congress, including the huge list of topics and presenters, go to the website <http://chha-ifhohcongress2008.com>

This Congress truly will be the opportunity of a lifetime.

We have arranged for an Alaskan cruise after the Congress, mainly for our out-of-country guests, but it is open to any Congress attendee. What more fun can you have than to visit leisurely with fellow hard of hearing people, and watch the spectacular scenery float past. What a treat in store for you!

CHHA-BC's Resource Centre is currently working on the Silent Auction for the Congress, and we welcome donations from all parts of BC that demonstrate our wide cultural diversity. Delegates can take them home as part of their treasured memories of a Congress like no other.

The CHHA Board participates on a number of committees to represent the hard of hearing community in various parts of the province.

There is such a demand for volunteers that we are often putting out a call for people to pitch in for a time or two. For example, CHHA North Shore once again was involved in **the Health Fair**.

CHHA Vancouver, a reformed branch, is actively planning the **airport welcoming committee for the national and international Congress delegates**. I'm sure they would welcome willing faces and smiles. Sophie Paller, our BC **Young Adult** representative, could use some **support and ideas** in her planning sessions for the conference as well.

As your new president, I am pleased to see the willingness, eagerness and enthusiasm to pitch in that people have, especially to help with the Congress. I daresay I can speak for CHHA National that they are delighted and relieved to have such strong support, as it eases their load in planning from afar.

Am I excited? You bet I am!

I had my first experience of an IFHOH Congress in 1992, in Israel, and that was such a treat meeting hard of hearing people from various parts of the world. Now to combine my favorite organizations, CHHA, and IFHOH, together is an unbelievable honour.

We truly can demonstrate a global community.



*Leslie Scott*

*Leslie Scott*

President, CHHA-BC

## Interview with Ruth Warick (cont'd)

Nonetheless, I believe that there is a concept of a hearing loss called *habitus*. This term, developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, means "a way of being." Bourdieu uses this concept in relation to social class and believes that responses to the world can be shaped by social class.

Through my studies of the experiences of hard of hearing students in universities, I came away with the sense that hearing loss is akin to *habitus* because of its pervasive impact, even if it is not the only force in students' lives. Students choose classes based on how well they would hear the professors and other students; their interactions with other students were affected by their hearing loss, and career choices were also impacted.

**Karina:** When we talk about definitions "hearing-impaired", "deaf", "Deaf", "hard of hearing", which definitions are used most often in Canada?

**Ruth:** Both national associations for the deaf and hard of hearing in Canada prefer the terms "Deaf and Hard of Hearing" to the rather ambiguous term "hearing impaired," which means that the person has a hearing loss but it is not clear whether the person is Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Members of the general public, however, often don't understand these distinctions and part of our job is to educate them.

**Karina:** Is there a system of state benefits for hard of hearing people in Canada? How does it work and what are the similarities to that found in the US?

**Ruth:** The system of state benefits for hard of hearing persons really varies in Canada because responsibilities are split between different levels of

government. All healthcare is administered provincially and territorially and there are some broad guidelines.

The United States also has a framework that sees differences at the national level and then at the state level.

What is the same for both Canada and the United States is that each has strong national statements about the rights of persons with disabilities and strong human rights legislation.

In principle, each person with a disability is entitled to a life of dignity and access to all that society has to offer.

In reality, there are disparities in achieving this dream since the unemployment and poverty rates are higher for persons with disabilities than for the general population and this is true for persons with hearing loss.

**Karina:** What is the attitude of hard of hearing and deaf people toward cochlear implants in Canada now? It seems that in some countries (e.g. France), more deaf young people are being implanted with CIs, which makes them more "hard of hearing" than "d/Deaf". Is it the case in Canada, too?

**Ruth:** I think that CI use is increasing around the world as research has demonstrated its success, provided that the appropriate candidates are given the procedure.

Increasingly, we are seeing youth who define themselves as deaf/hard of hearing depending on the situation and circumstances and easily move between such definitions. We have some students who use captioning, sign interpreting, or oral interpreting - whatever works best for them in a given situation.



For the full interview, see [www.i711](http://www.i711) "Considering Hearing Loss in Canada."

**Karina Chupina** is a freelance international trainer, consultant, and writer from St. Petersburg, Russia.

She became interested in international matters and writing during the year she spent at an American high school in Tecumseh, MI. She went on to earn an M.A. in International Journalism (St. Petersburg) and an Executive MA in International and European Relations & Management (Amsterdam).

Among other things, Karina is deeply involved with local disability youth organisation and IFHOHYP, the International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People, and serves as its President.

## AT THE RESOURCE CENTRE The Display Unit

The CHHA-BC display unit is ready for this very busy time of year.

In January it went to the CHHA HEAR Branch, Coquitlam, for a special presentation.

In February it was at the Fraser Valley Fair, in Abbotsford, and also was downtown at the annual Vancouver Wellness Show, where the stand was organised and mainly manned by the North Shore Branch. It was also at the University College of the Fraser Valley Transition Fair.

The display unit gives very effective publicity, and is available for any of our Branches to make use of.

*Please book early.*

Laurene McNaught  
Resource Centre Administrator

## Parents' Branch Check off these dates

- ✓ May 3  
Spring Workshop
- ✓ October 3-5  
Family Weekend  
at Zajac Ranch

## Something New in Hearing

A discovery that will affect the hard-of-hearing in the future has been found by MIT Prof. Dennis M. Freeman working with graduate student Roozbeh Ghaffari and research scientist Alexander J. Aranyosi. They found that the tectorial membrane, a gelatinous structure inside the cochlea of the ear, is much more important to hearing than previously thought. It selectively picks up and transmits energy to different parts of the cochlea via a wave that is different from that commonly associated with hearing.

It has been known for half a century that inside the cochlea, sound waves are translated into up-and-down waves that travel along the basilar membrane. But they found that a different kind of wave, a traveling wave that moves from side to side, can also carry sound energy. This wave moves along the tectorial membrane which is situated directly above the sensory hair cells that transmit sounds to the brain. This second wave mechanism is poised to play a crucial role in delivering sound signals to these hair cells.

In short, the ear can mechanically translate sounds into two different kinds of wave motion at once. These waves can interact to excite the hair cells and enhance their sensitivity — which explains how we hear sounds as quiet as whispers. This interaction

may be the key part of how we are able to hear with such fidelity as knowing when a single instrument in an orchestra is out of tune.

The tectorial membrane is difficult to study because it is small (the entire length could fit inside a one-inch piece of human hair). It is fragile (97% water with the consistency of a jellyfish) and nearly transparent.

The team learned about the new wave by suspending an isolated piece of tectorial membrane between two supports, then launched waves at audio frequencies and watched how it responded by using a stroboscopic imaging system developed in the Freeman Laboratory. That system can measure nanometer-scale displacements at frequencies up to a million cycles per second.

The team's discovery has implications on future models of cochlear implants. Because the tectorial membrane is so tiny and fragile, people tend to think it is "wimpy and not important" — but Freeman says it can transport energy throughout the cochlea and is very significant indeed.

Larry Sivertson

*HOH-LD-News*, Vol.33, Issue 4

You may contact Larry Sivertson at:  
[lsivertson@juno.com](mailto:lsivertson@juno.com) or  
[www.hearinglossweb.com](http://www.hearinglossweb.com)

### **NORTH SHORE BRANCH — Safety for the Hard of Hearing**

At an excellent meeting held by the North Shore Branch, four guests each made a presentation on this topic. They were the Director of Public Education and a Paramedic, both from the Ambulance Paramedics of BC; a Constable from the RCMP; and a Fire Inspector from the City Fire Department.

Other CHHA Branches have featured this topic, too. Safety is a major concern, but especially if you cannot hear what is going on around you.

### **LET YOUR MUSIC RING OUT**



Most of us  
go to our  
grave with our music  
still inside of us.

### **CHHA / IFHOH Congress 2008**

July 2 to July 6

**Make your booking as early as possible.  
Share a room at the Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre,  
the Congress venue. Excellent rates for delegates.**

## **NEW MEETING TIME FOR CHHA, VANCOUVER**

The Vancouver Branch has changed its meeting time to 7 pm on Thursdays, which is more convenient to most people.

In March, it will be held on the 2nd Thursday, but from then on it will be held on the 3rd Thursday.

Meetings for the next three months will be:

### **March 13 Customs Officer, CCRA**

“Concerns of Hard of Hearing People in Communicating with Customs Officers.”

### **April 17 Catherine Kaulback,**

“Federal Government Accommodation for the Hard of Hearing.”

### **May 15 Birgit Cook,**

“A Speech Reading Computer Program for the Hard of Hearing.”

### **All meetings**

7 p.m. at  
Vancouver Oral Centre Library  
3575 Kaslo Street, Vancouver.

Parking available.

For information:

Phone: 604-733-3245  
604-778-8431  
604-572-0314

Email:

[chhavancouver@hotmail.com](mailto:chhavancouver@hotmail.com)



**Three conferences rolled into one!  
That is what we are getting in place of the annual national CHHA conference this year.**

CHHA is hosting the 8<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People, and combining it with the CHHA national Conference. In addition, CHHA-BC Chapter is foregoing its annual fall conference in favour of this one.

We will have a good mix of national and international speakers, with an exciting array of challenging and informative topics.

**The range of plenaries and workshop presentations is outstanding.** The opening plenary features the adventures of a daring young Swedish man, the first hard of hearing pilot to fly around the world. He set out to generate Hearing Loss Awareness in more than 20 countries and reached millions of people.

**Do have a look at the web page:** [www.chha-ifhohcongress2008.com](http://www.chha-ifhohcongress2008.com) for a description of the Congress schedule, the list of workshops, biographies of the presenters, and information about registering. The next issue of *Listen* will publish the workshop schedule.

**The most exciting discovery of recent decades has been the news**

**that the brain, rather than being 'hard wired' or fixed, has the ability to change itself.** The new science of neuroplasticity was born.

Our second plenary speaker, a researcher in this field, reports on how these powers of the brain have importance for learning to hear again, and the significance of this fact for the hard of hearing and deafened.

**Did you know that Canada, as a member of IFHOH, is now represented at the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities?** This committee has produced a Convention dealing with the rights of persons with disabilities – a human rights approach, rather than a medical approach. Hard of hearing people now have a level of recognition and participation that they have never before had at this level.

This will be our chance to hear about it, during one of the plenary sessions, and learn what this means for our country .

One of the most beneficial elements of any conference is the opportunity to meet and talk with people. Ideas are expressed, dialogue takes place, friends are made, plans sug-

gested. People become excited about possibilities to further the cause of the hard of hearing, building on ideas generated at the conference.

The closing plenary will answer these questions with an innovative proposal fitting the Congress theme "A Global Community of Communication."

The days and evenings will be packed, with Plenaries, Workshops, Panels, a Poster Session, a Youth Forum, a Trade Fair, and social events.

There is also quite a bit of interest in the **post-Congress Alaska Cruise.** Information about this can be found on the Congress web page, as well as information about booking your reservation at the Sheraton Wall Centre, the Congress hotel.

**Without a hint of bias (ahem) I can say that the 2008 Congress is going to have the most exciting program yet presented.** And I have attended all of the world congresses, which take place only every fourth year.

**Don't miss it!  
See you in Vancouver in July.**  
Marilyn Dahl

**From the RESOURCE CENTRE**

We need your assistance to produce a new and exciting brochure for CHHA-BC. We are looking for pictures that show our members in action. Could we please ask you to look through your photos from past CHHA events and see if there are some that would be suitable. An upcoming event? Take your camera along. Feel free to be creative. If we use one of your pictures, we will need permission from the person in the picture before we can put it on our brochure. If we can't use it this time, we hope you will allow us to keep the picture on file for possible use on another project. All photos can be sent to [chha-bc2@telus.net](mailto:chha-bc2@telus.net) Attention Laurene McNaught.

## HEARING AIDS ARE REUSABLE

When someone needs a hearing aid and cannot afford to purchase one, that person can contact the local Lions Club for help.

The Club does a financial assessment to determine eligibility. If eligible, they will then help them to be fitted with the needed hearing aid that they could not purchase on their own.

How do they do it? **They use those old not-now-working-for-you hearing aids that you've replaced? The ones you donated to the program.**

The equipment is cleaned and serviced and brought back to a "like new" condition.

Please send The Lions Club any second-hand hearing aids that you, a family member, or a friend might have.



Just drop them off wherever you see a Lions of B.C. Hearing Conservation Society drop-off box, like this one at the Resource Centre.

Call your local Lions club to see if there is a drop-off box in your area.

The Lions of B.C. Hearing Conservation Society program is a great program, and many people throughout the province have benefited from it.

But the Lions Club needs your donations to keep the program going.

This is recycling at its best.

Laurene McNaught  
Administrator, Resource Centre

**CHHA-BC  
RESOURCE CENTRE**  
#102 - 9300 Nowell Street  
Chilliwack, BC, V2P 4V7



**Call us Toll Free**

**Voice: 1-866-888-2442**  
**Fax: 1-866-888-2443**

## Hearing Loss and Air Bags

by Neil Bauman, Ph.D.



Air bags save lives – and for that we are definitely thankful. They also destroy hearing – and that is not so nice. Here is Lisa's story.

*Last week I was involved in what should have been a minor car accident. I 'gently' hit the car in front of me stopped for a light.*

*What happened next was terrifying. The inside of the car seemed to explode in a deafening roar. I had unimaginable pain in both ears ... bleeding from my ear canals ... very loud ringing and was virtually deaf.*

*I was taken to hospital and referred to an ENT who said my ears should heal in 2-3 weeks, but possibly with scar tissue that would affect my ability to hear low sounds. As for the ringing, he said that could be permanent. He also said I had suffered inner ear damage that would affect my high-frequency hearing. He concluded by saying I would need to face life 'hearing impaired' and may need to look at hearing aids.*

*I'm only 22 and I can barely hear conversation in a quiet room. With background noise, I am almost deaf.*

(Hearing Loss Web Forum: Issues: Air bags ruined my life. Accessed online at [www.hearinglossweb.com/discus/messages/12/733.html?FridayJune1020050444pm](http://www.hearinglossweb.com/discus/messages/12/733.html?FridayJune1020050444pm))

Lisa is not alone. Many other people have also experienced tinnitus and/or hearing loss when air bags deploy. In fact, the results of researcher Richard Price's studies indicate that a whopping 17% of the people exposed to deployed air bags will experience PERMANENT hearing loss. That's a LOT of people — almost 1 in every 5 people exposed to air bags going off!

Here's another surprising discovery. His data also shows that contrary to what experts previously thought, airbag deployment is MORE damaging to our ears when we have the windows rolled down.

“This is because the higher pressure generated in the closed cabin actually prevents greater damage to the ear. The pressure causes a displacement in the middle ear that stiffens the stapes. This stiffening limits the transmission of energy to the inner ear, where hearing damage takes place.”

Incidentally, Price's study only included cars sold in the United States. American cars have larger, more powerful air bags than cars sold in Europe. Hence, cars with smaller air bags sold in other parts of the world would likely pose less auditory danger when tested under identical circumstances.

(As reported in The Hearing Review [http://www.hearingreview.com/issues/articles/2007-07\\_10.asp](http://www.hearingreview.com/issues/articles/2007-07_10.asp) taken from: Price Richard. Intense impulse noise: hearing conservation's poison gas. Paper presented at: Annual Conference of the National Hearing Conservation Association, February 16, 2007)

The moral of the story, and another good reason to drive carefully and avoid accidents, especially "fender benders," is that an air bag going off causes just as much damage to your ears whether you are going 15 miles an hour (and serious injuries are unlikely) or 80 miles an hour (where hearing loss may be the least of your worries!).

Dr. Neil Bauman may be contacted at: [neil@hearinglosshelp.com](mailto:neil@hearinglosshelp.com) or [www.hearinglosshelp.com](http://www.hearinglosshelp.com)

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## BLUETOOTH TECHNOLOGY

Curtis Les recently spoke to the Parents' Branch about Bluetooth technology – important for parents of hard of hearing children to understand, seeing they will expect their children to take advantage of each technological advance as soon as it appears on the market.

“Bluetooth” is a catchy name, but have you ever wondered what Bluetooth technology is and how it could be useful for hearing aid users?

Bluetooth is an international wireless communication system which can send signals between Bluetooth devices such as computers, mobile phones and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) in a clean, clear, digital format up to 10 metres.

Since it is digital, the audio signal is not subject to the same sources of signal degradation that sometimes compromise the quality of other types of transmission. A digital Bluetooth signal is extracted from the noise; it alone is transmitted and amplified, while noise is rejected.

The low-power design of

Bluetooth transmission systems has two advantages. It minimizes battery consumption for portable devices. Also, it places an intentional limit on the range of transmission – the most common version has a range of 10 metres – which helps to avoid interference among nearby devices. At the same time, walls and other obstacles have a negligible effect on Bluetooth transmission.

Curtis commented, “Bluetooth isn't incorporated directly into hearing aids yet because the battery power required is too much. However, Phonak has developed a system called SmartLink that combines FM technology and Bluetooth, allowing for connection of Bluetooth devices, such as cell phones, with hearing aids.”

Cell phones and hearing aids have notoriously been poor at working together, but anyone using SmartLink for FM communication is automatically equipped for a Bluetooth cell phone.

## THE SILENT AUCTION (SHH. NO TALKING REQUIRED.)

The Resource Centre is busy planning the Silent Auction for the international Congress, and we are starting to see great items coming in.

The branches are working with us on the big job of finding items for the auction. Each branch has been asked to donate an item, and we're hoping that the item donated will be something that reflects the uniqueness of the region that they live in. So far we have received from CHHA Toronto a beautiful hand-knit sweater made from wool from Northern Ontario, and with a polar bear on the front.

Members from the branches are out in their communities seeking donations for the auction. They take with them a sample letter which tells of the importance of this international event and explains a little of what CHHA is all about. It also advises companies that for a donation we will be glad to acknowledge their company at this event.

It is a great opportunity for advertising.

## CRTC Finally Approves Video Relay Service for Deaf Canadians

For four years, the Canadian Association of the Deaf and the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf have been fighting tirelessly to bring Video Relay Service (VRS) to Canada.

For the past year, they have been arguing for VRS in a public proceeding of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). This proceeding was trying to decide how the phone companies should spend millions of dollars in a funding pot known as the “deferral accounts”.

On January 17th, the CRTC finally announced its decision. You can find the full decision on their website here:

<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/ENG/Decisions/2008/dt2008-1.htm>

Bell Canada and Telus will each set up their own regional VRS. Telus will serve B.C. and Alberta. Bell will serve Ontario and Quebec.

Source: FNDC/DYT - Community Updates for January 31, 2008

## Call for Correspondents

The CHHA/IFHOH Congress will be a very big, very exciting international affair, which will be attended by hundreds (thousands?) of people converging on the Sheraton Wall Centre from Canada, the United States, and many overseas countries.

Some of our members will be prevented from attending, and The Loop will attempt to communicate through its pages something of the information from the plenaries and workshops, and something of the atmosphere of the Congress through the social events and entertainment. This will take a lot of coverage – far more than one editor can handle.

**We are therefore asking, begging, pleading for help.**

**Please – any of you who plan to be at the Congress and who don't mind writing down something of what you see, hear, or learn – contact me and tell me you will be a Correspondent for the Congress.**

Jessie Ellis, Editor  
604-581-6759 or [jessieellis@shaw.ca](mailto:jessieellis@shaw.ca)

## Over-the-counter eardrops may cause hearing loss or damage

A new study, led by researchers at The Montreal Children's Hospital of the McGill University Health Centre, has revealed that certain over-the-counter earwax softeners can cause severe inflammation and damage to the eardrum and inner ear. The results of the study, recently published in *The Laryngoscope*, suggest that use of these medications should be discouraged.

"Patients often complain that wax is blocking their ears and is causing discomfort and sometimes deafness," says Dr. Sam Daniel, principal investigator of the study and director of McGill Auditory Sciences Laboratory at The Children's.

"Over-the-counter earwax softeners are used to breakup and disperse this excess wax. However, the effects of these medications on the cells of the ear had not been thoroughly analyzed. Because some of these products are readily available to the public without a consultation with, or prescription from a physician, it is important to make sure they are safe to use. Our study shows that in a well-established animal model, one such product, Cerumenex, is in fact, toxic to the cells of the ear," says Dr. Daniel.

Dr. Daniel and his team studied the impact of Cerumenex on hearing. In addition, overall toxicity in the outer ear and changes in the nerve cells of the inner ear were analyzed.

"Harmful effects to many of the cells were observed after only one dose," says Dr. Melvin Schloss co-author and MCH Director of Otolaryngology. "We observed reduced hearing, severe inflammation, and lesions to the nerve cells."

"We believe these findings are applicable to humans," adds Dr. Daniel. "The animal model we chose has been widely used to test toxicity. In addition, this model has a very similar hearing mechanism. Overall, our findings suggest that Cerumenex has a toxic potential and it should be used with caution."

Canada News-Wire  
28 Jan 2008

## ADDICTION TO PORTABLE MUSIC PLAYERS

With the increased usage of portable music devices, both adults and youth are becoming more susceptible to potential premature hearing loss.

Tinnitus is one of the possible side effects of exposure to the loud music heard from portable listening devices. Tinnitus is a ringing or buzzing heard in the ears or head on a regular basis, and is often the result of exposure to loud noises.

At the same time, it is even possible to experience partial or full hearing loss as a result of this exposure.

This is not to say that people need to quit listening to the music they enjoy. There are a few simple steps that can significantly reduce the risk in listening to a portable music player.

**1. Turn it down.** Most people attempt to block out the surrounding noise by turning up the volume. A general rule is "when you can't hear that noise any more, it's too loud".

**2. Re-evaluate your headphones.** Ear bud headphones are more damaging to your ears than an over-the-ear style headphone. The proximity of the noise to the inner ear canal with ear buds creates a higher intensity. As well, ear buds often require louder volumes to block out that ambient noise.

Over-the-ear style headphones come in a variety of styles, and are also available in what is called isolation, or noise cancellation headphones. These headphones are designed to filter background noise, allowing the listener to enjoy music at a safer level.

**3. Limit exposure time.** If you are going to listen to loud volumes, keep in mind that for every volume increase of 3 dB, listening time should be cut in half. If you just can't turn it down, turn it off for awhile.

**4. Examine other options.** For iPod listeners specifically, "limiter" software can be downloaded from Apple's website. The limiter on your device restricts the volume to a maximum of 115 dB at its peak. As Dr. Chasin of the Musicians' Clinic of Canada indicates, this is a very smart move.

These steps do not eliminate the risk completely; prolonged exposure to any loud volume does carry the risk of hearing loss. Like any preventative measure, some work better for certain individuals than others, and it is important to find the method that works best for you.

**Welcome to Kevan van Herd**, who has volunteered to be a regular editorial assistant for The Loop.

Kevan has written for us previously. He is a retired reporter and newspaper editor, and will mostly edit articles which will be forwarded to him, and he will reduce them to a manageable size for The Loop.

We are looking for others to join us in this work as The Loop has grown far beyond its beginnings ten years ago.

Anyone interested, please contact Jessie Ellis, Editor, at 604-581-6759 or [jessieellis@shaw.ca](mailto:jessieellis@shaw.ca)

Everyone has a photographic memory. Some just don't have film.  
Nick Langshaw