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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**WIDESPREAD ADDICTION TO PORTABLE MUSIC PLAYERS INCREASING POTENTIAL FOR PREMATURE HEARING LOSS IN YOUTH, ADULTS ALIKE - PT. 2**

With increased usage of portable music devices, both adults and youth alike are becoming more susceptible to potential premature hearing loss. The following outlines possible risks and preventative measures that can be taken to help prevent permanent hearing loss.

While it is not a widespread epidemic, 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 of thumb is when you can't hear that noise anymore, it's too loud.
- 2. Reevaluate 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. Ear buds often require louder volumes to block out that ambient noise as well. 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 his or her 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. Avoid exposure to other loud noises such as the lawnmower or hairdryer, and enjoy some peace and quiet.
- 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 good strategy and smart move in order to protect listeners.

It is important to understand that these steps do not eliminate the risk completely and that prolonged exposure to any loud volumes does carry the risk of potential hearing loss. Like any preventative measures, some work better for certain individuals than others, and as such it is important to find the method that works best for you.

The goal at CHHA is to raise awareness of the hard of hearing community and educate individuals about hearing loss. To learn more about the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, and issues such as personal portable music devices, visit their website at <http://www.chha.ca> or call **Voice:** 613-526-1584 **TTY:** 613-526-2692, **Toll-Free:** 1-800-263-8068 (In Canada Only).