



Blow Dryer Activity

<https://www.noisyplanet.nidcd.nih.gov>



Every day, we experience sound in our environment, such as the sounds from television and radio, household appliances, and traffic. Normally, these sounds are at safe levels that do not damage our hearing. However, sounds can be harmful when they are too loud, even for a brief time, or when they are both loud and long lasting. These sounds can damage sensitive structures in the inner ear and cause noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). Approximately 26 million adults in the United States—and millions of teens—have hearing loss likely caused by noise.

The good news is that NIHL is preventable. Developing healthy hearing habits while young is a key step to preventing hearing loss. To increase awareness among parents and youth about NIHL and how to prevent it, the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), part of the National Institutes of Health, developed the health education campaign *It's a Noisy Planet. Protect Their Hearing.*[®]

The Noisy Planet campaign offers a wide range of print and online materials to help spread the word and educate youth and adults about the importance of hearing preservation. One component of the campaign is an interactive 45-minute classroom presentation. There are several activities that presenters can choose to reinforce the educational messages. One activity to reinforce the “move away from the noise” message is the blow dryer activity. The blow dryer activity shows the audience how moving away from the source of a sound can protect their hearing.




Materials:

- Two sound level meters
- Loud blow dryer

Steps:

1. Ask for two volunteers from the audience.
2. Stand near an outlet and ask one of the volunteers to stand near you while holding a sound meter. Have the other volunteer take the other sound meter and go about 10 or 15 feet away from you.
3. Have the volunteer standing near you put their sound meter (turned on) right under the nozzle of the blow dryer and note the highest number that comes up on the sound meter. Ask the volunteer to remember the number but not say it out loud so their classmates can guess how many decibels it was.

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4. Have the volunteer that is 10 to 15 feet away do the same.
 5. Ask the class to guess the decibel level of the sound meter close to the blow dryer. Ask the volunteer to say the highest decibel-level reading. Ask the audience if that sound level will cause hearing damage. The answer is yes if the blow dryer is over 85 decibels.
 6. Ask the class to guess the decibel level of the sound meter far from the blow dryer by asking for guesses and having the students raise their hands. Then have that volunteer read the highest decibel level.

For free materials or to learn more about how to prevent NIHL, visit the Noisy Planet website at <https://www.noisyplanet.nidcd.nih.gov>.

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), conducts and supports research in the normal and disordered processes of hearing, balance, taste, smell, voice, speech, and language.

For more information about hearing and hearing loss, contact:

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