



Hearing loss warning

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A MOUNT Gambier hearing specialist has warned of the risk of permanent hearing damage though everyday activities.

HearingLife audiometrist Abhay Kumar said activities such as listening to music and mowing the lawn have the potential to cause irreversible damage.

Dr Kumar believes that people undertaking activities such as mowing the lawn, listening to music and being exposed to traffic noise don't realise how loud it is and the effect it is having on their hearing.

Statistics from a

recent survey in Mount Gambier by HearingLife show that less than one in three residents wear hearing protection when in noisy environments.

Results also indicate that many residents consider hearing loss as the second highest health issue of major concern behind loss of eyesight.

Dr Kumar said despite these concerns, hearing loss was still treated as a secondary issue that most people don't do anything about until they're affected.

"It is simple (prevention), avoid noisy situations," Dr Kumar said.

"If you do need to be exposed, give your hearing a break."

While Mount Gambier has a heavily populated industrial sector, Dr Kumar said a lack of knowledge and feeling disconnected from peers led to many workers in the sector not wearing the correct hearing protection.

Dr Kumar advised everyone to have a hearing test done each year because hearing loss can develop so gradually it is hard to detect when a significant loss has happened.

He said one of the main problems people who develop hearing loss is denial.

"With hearing loss people blame others, not themselves."

Dr Kumar said the development of hearing aids has led to more people coming forward to address the issue.

He believes clients who were once embarrassed to wear the aid have welcomed the smaller and more discrete designs which go unnoticed in their ear.

While some aids can be a costly investment, Dr Kumar said a home trial was available for clients so they could test it in their day-to-day life before making a commitment.

How loud is too loud?

- 30dB - Whispering.
- 60dB - Normal conversation.
- 70dB - Vacuum cleaner.
- 80dB - Hearing damage begins.**
- 90dB - Mowing the lawns.
- 100dB - Average iPod volume.
- 110dB - Rock concert.
- 150dB - Fireworks.

*dB = decibels



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