

Hearing HealthCare News®

A newsletter for our patients, their families and friends

 Summer 2026

Why Are Movies So Loud?

Have you ever been at the movies when the coming attractions start, and the sudden loud blast makes you jump out of your seat? Movies can be so loud that some moviegoers cover their ears.

Why are movies so loud?

The short answer: because they can be. With digital recordings and modern speakers, very loud sounds can now be reproduced with minimal distortion.

Making loud sounds louder than normal—and soft sounds softer than normal—is the opposite of what a person with hearing loss needs. Someone with hearing loss may find it helpful when soft sounds are louder, but loud sounds should not be amplified at all.

The real cause of jet-engine level noise blasting at us during some movies, though, is not technical. Directors, sound mixers, film editors and projectionists use sound to force the viewer to pay attention. Their purpose may be to make the film seem more exciting, more vivid.



Although there are state and federal regulations about sound levels in work settings and our communities, there are no regulations about sound levels in movie theaters. But after receiving many complaints, several states are considering legislation.

The sound levels measured during movies support the need for regulation. Sound levels of 85 to 105 decibels (A) are not unusual. Action films such as *Transformers* have been measured at 120 dB (A), which is like standing next to a jet engine.

But the real test should not be a sound level recording or a decibel scale. It should be us—the viewing audience. Have you ever heard a moviegoer say, “I wish they would make it louder”?

Restaurant Noise Comes in First Place

“It’s just too noisy,” is the most common complaint in many restaurant surveys and reviews. And that’s from people with normal hearing.

Have restaurants gotten noisier?

Yes, they have. The background noise includes music, the clatter of silverware and dishes, and more recently, the blaring sound of television sets in the dining area. The other major source of noise is the voices of other diners who talk loudly because they can’t hear each other.

Changes in restaurant décor are also a factor. Sound absorbing carpets, drapes and tablecloths have been replaced with bare walls and tables and floors that reflect noise back into the room.



Crowded rooms, hard surfaces and loud voices can make a restaurant a very difficult place for conversation.

There are several steps you can take to cope with noisy restaurants. The most obvious step is to avoid them. A University of California study found that noise levels in all but “elegant” restaurants are loud enough to interfere with normal conversation, *whether or not you have a hearing loss*.

Many restaurant reviews now include a description of the noise level. The on-line restaurant review site **Yelp** will sometimes describe whether the noise level in a restaurant is quiet, moderate or loud.

What else can you do?

Choose your location. Ask to be seated away from the kitchen entrance, service areas or large groups. It’s usually best to sit with your back to the wall so your server can’t talk from behind you and noise from behind is kept to a minimum.

“A common complaint of people with normal hearing is difficulty hearing in noisy restaurants.”

Limit the size of your group. Dining with two or three others is much easier than dining with a large group.

Order from the menu. Or ask to see a written list of any specials. It can be very challenging to understand when the waiter or waitress quickly presents a long list of specialty items.

Turn it down. If loud music is playing, ask the manager or server if the music can be turned down. Other diners will thank you!

Safe Driving Tips

With many drivers today using cell phones to talk and even text while behind the wheel, driving can be a stressful experience. Here are some suggestions for safe driving:

- Using a cell phone while driving is illegal in most states (unless hands-free). About 10% of all accidents are attributed to distracted driving.
- Keep the radio volume to a minimum so you can hear traffic sounds.
- You can’t read lips while driving! If having a conversation distracts you, ask your passengers not to talk to you unless necessary.
- Make frequent use of all side and rearview mirrors when changing lanes and passing. Many side mirrors now have visual warning lights when a car is in your blind spot.
- The sound of most turn signals is not designed for people with hearing loss. Look to make sure your turn signal is off after making a turn.

WELCOME

...to the Summer issue of our patient newsletter. We hope you find the information useful to you and to your family.

Our practice is based on these fundamental principles:

- **Hearing loss is serious**
- **Hearing loss deserves professional care**
- **Hearing aids improve lives**

More Tips for Hearing Aid Users

- ❑ Today's hearing aids need repair much less frequently than years ago. A hearing aid that stops working is usually due to ear wax getting inside the instrument. Most hearing aids now have wax guards, but these can occasionally become clogged with wax. If you try a new battery and your hearing aid doesn't work, replacing the wax guard may solve the problem.
- ❑ *Feedback*—that whistling sound made by a hearing aid—should not occur unless you cup your hand over the hearing aid or bring a telephone too close. A build-up of ear wax, which blocks the amplified sound, can also cause feedback.

A loose-fitting ear mold or ear tip could also be the culprit.

- ❑ The quality of sound on television sets ranges from excellent to terrible and varies from channel to channel on the same TV set. Almost all television sets have built-in captioning that displays a written text of what is being said. The captioning is available simply by turning it on through the remote control.
- ❑ *Travel tip:* Use a small dri-aid jar to keep your hearing aid secure at night. Be sure to bring plenty of batteries and even spare hearing aids. You probably won't need the

back-up hearing aids, but at least you won't worry, "What if . . ."

- ❑ *Check your smoke alarm.* Almost half of people with hearing loss do not hear their smoke alarm unless they have their hearing aids on.
- ❑ *Telephone use:* If you have a smart phone, text messaging or video calls such as FaceTime is much easier than regular voice calls.
- ❑ Listening to music used to be a challenge for people with hearing loss due to limitations in hearing aid capabilities. Today's hearing aids are much more effective at handling the dynamic range of music.

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Cancellation And No Show Policy

We are dedicated to providing excellent hearing healthcare that meets and exceeds our patients' expectations.

Because of the increase in patients who do not show for a scheduled appointment, we have decided to administer a cancellation and no-show policy. "No Show" means any patient who fails to arrive for an appointment. "Same Day Cancellation" means the cancellation occurred less than 24 hours prior. Patients who are "No Show" or "Same Day Cancel" are subject to a \$50 fee for hearing tests and a \$25 fee for all other appointments.

We understand that situations arise in which you must cancel your appointment. Patients are asked to call or leave a message at least 24 hours prior to their appointment. This policy will enable our office to make available appointments for patients in need of prompt hearing healthcare.

Sincerely,

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