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Teen Talk

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The Center for
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Children's Hospital Boston

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Girls Unite '06

by *Rebecca Marshall, MSW, LCSW,
Social Work Fellow & former CYWH
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On August 12th, the Center for Young Women's Health partnered with the Boston Center for Youth and Families (BCYF) and Northeastern University Sport in Society to host the first **Citywide Girls Summit**, a culmination of BCYF's "No More Drama" summer initiative aimed at preventing violence among girls in the City of Boston. Over 170 girls ages 11-19 from Boston and surrounding communities participated in the event which was free to young women, parents and community leaders. Highlights of the day included resource tables hosted by over 40 community organizations, and workshops led by prominent Boston women including Sheriff Andrea Cabral, Suffolk County Sheriff, and Dr. Shari Nethersole, Medical Director for Community Health, Children's Hospital Boston.

Girls were inspired by opening remarks made by Mayor Menino, his wife Angela Menino, Northeastern University President Dr. Joseph Aoun, and Dr. Marc R. Laufer, Chief of Gynecology, at Children's Hospital Boston and Co-Director of the Center for Young Women's Health (CYWH). Girls participated in a variety of workshops that focused on self-esteem, safety, nutrition, community involvement, and academic support and resources. Our very own CYWH youth advisors presented a workshop entitled, "Fueling Your Body for Good Health."

Maya Angelou's poem "Still I Rise" provided inspiration for the Summit. The event provided girls with tools to help them overcome the adversity and violence they are facing in their communities. Girls who participated left feeling that the City of Boston and its partnering organizations care about the well-being of girls. ♥



Shari Nethersole, MD, Medical Director for Community Health, Children's Hospital Boston, hosts a roundtable discussion at the Citywide Girls Summit, 2006.

Can you hear me now?



It seems like everywhere you turn, someone is listening to an MP3 player or jamming to a CD player. Forty million iPods have been sold in the United States alone. There are thousands of different MP3 players. Listening to music with an MP3 player has become so popular that some people call it an epidemic. The real concern is whether or not listening with the volume cranked up can cause hearing loss.

For answers I needed some expert advice. Luckily, I work at Children's Hospital Boston, and have access to some of the best doctors and researchers in the world. When I Googled "iPods and hearing loss" the name, Dr. Brian Fligor at Children's Hospital Boston kept coming up. I contacted the doctor and he graciously agreed to an interview.

Dr. Brian J. Fligor
Director of Diagnostic Audiology
Children's Hospital Boston



Dr. Fligor has recently been researching a **safe-listening level** for MP3 players. Here are some questions I asked about portable players, and the possible link to hearing loss in teens and adults who use them.



By Caitlin

You might be thinking, "I'm just a teen, what can I do for the environment?" The answer is you can do a lot everyday to play an active role in preserving the world you live in. Some teens may not think that the preservation of the environment is an important issue needing our attention now, however the state of the environment is crucial to our futures as adults.

Here are three ideas to get your conservation habits going:

Recycle! You've heard it a million times but recycling really does help the environment. Be sure to recycle your paper goods and plastic containers. Find out if your school recycles paper and disposable items like styrofoam lunch trays. If your school doesn't, start a recycling club with your friends.

Save Energy. Turn off lights when you're not using them. Turn off computers and other gear that's not in use. Unplug electronics gear and battery chargers when they're unused - they draw a lot of energy even when they're not switched on!

Save Fuel. Walk or ride your bike instead of driving. Not only will you be cutting down on pollution & saving yourself some cash, you'll be getting fit too! Take public transportation whenever possible. If you have to drive make sure your car's tires are properly inflated. When the tires are full, the engine is more efficient.

Starting with these ideas will help you reduce pollution, conserve valuable resources, and help save you money, a win-win for you and the environment! ♡

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Q: What causes hearing loss?

- A: ① **Age** - As you get older, your body starts to wear out and so do your ears.
- ② **Noise** - Approximately 31 million people in the United States have hearing loss due to noise. Although hearing loss is not curable, it is preventable.
- ③ **Drugs** - Hearing loss can be a side effect of some medications.

Q: Does our generation's use of audio equipment concern you? If so why?

A: I am concerned about every generation. Some people in the WWII generation had to fire guns, which caused hearing loss. There is always a situation in every generation that puts them at risk for certain kinds of hearing loss. For example, people who earn their living by doing construction work, performing at concerts, working near aircraft, or driving vehicles with loud sirens are in situations that are unavoidable. Others just don't realize that the use of audio equipment should be limited. It is a tragedy to lose hearing because of the overuse of audio players. It has been documented that 0.5% of the United States population is abusing audio equipment. That is 1 out of every 200,000 people.



Q: How is using audio equipment going to affect our generation's future?

A: If people abuse audio equipment during their teenage years, some may need hearing aids by their 30's.

Hearing loss is painless and often unnoticeable but it all adds up during your lifetime. We have to take care of our ears for the long term.

Q: What can we do to prevent hearing loss?

- A: ① Follow the **60/60 rule** when using audio equipment. That means: no more than sixty minutes a day at 60% of the maximum volume on your audio player.
- ② Use special headphones that block outside noise so you will not be forced to raise the volume higher to hear your music.
- ③ If you're someplace where it's loud, leave and find someplace quieter or use hearing protection such as foam earplugs or the ER 20 high-fidelity earplugs which reduce sound by 20 decibels without blocking it out.

Q: If you were to give one piece of advice to teens using portable audio equipment what would it be?

A: Invest in good earphones; instead of buying the 4Gig iPod, buy the 2Gig and get safer earphones that block out noise. The technical name for these is: "Noise canceling headsets/ear-phones."

Although it hasn't yet been proven that hearing loss can be caused by MP3-player use, preliminary research suggests that listening with the volume turned up high may cause hearing loss over time. Keep yourself aware of the risks so you can protect your hearing! And remember: **Using noise cancellation headsets can help reduce damage to your ears.** ♡

SURVIVING SCHOOL

by Cecillia Lui & the CYWH Staff

Let's face it school can be stressful, especially at the beginning of the school year. As the summer rolls to an end and the air gets crisp and cool, the thought of having to get up at the crack of dawn would give anyone reason to roll over and go back to sleep. Add the anticipation of homework assignments and exams into the mix and you have **back-to-school stress**. But the start of school doesn't have to be all about stress and anxiety. Here are 5 survival tips, to help you set the stage for a great school year!

1 | Create a "Study Zone"

Find a quiet place where you can concentrate and where you don't have distractions like TV, loud noise or people talking. When you finish your homework you can leave your study zone, and go relax in a different environment like outside or in another room.

2 | Stay Organized

You've heard it all before, "Buy a calendar and keep track of your homework assignments and projects!" The key though is *staying* organized! Your agenda can be your best friend by helping to keep important dates straight.

3 | Eat Breakfast

If you don't have time to sit and eat a full breakfast, be sure to pack healthy portable foods like granola bars, fruit, yogurt drinks, and cheese sticks. Food is your body's fuel and eating well will help keep you focused during your classes!

4 | Relax

Before diving into your homework, take some time after school to exercise, draw, play an instrument, or catch up with friends. Leaving time to de-stress will help you ease back into the pace of school.

5 | Look to the Future

Create a set of goals for yourself for the upcoming school year, academically and socially. Write them on a large poster board that you can hang in your room. Write down some of the steps it will take to reach those goals. During the year, check your board to see your progress, and to remind yourself of the things that are important to you. ♡