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. 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.

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.

Can you hear me now?

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.
But the start of school doesn’t have to be all about stress and up at the crack of dawn would give anyone reason to roll over and go back to sleep. Let’s face it school can be stressful, especially at the beginning of the school year. As study zone, and go relax in homework you can leave your talking. When you finish your like TV, loud noise or people chargers when they’re unused - they more efficient. When the tires are full, the engine is possible. If you have to drive make sure instead of driving. Not only will you be Save Fuel. Unplug you’re not using them. Turn off com recycling really does help the preserving the world you!Organized | staying to keep important dates organizing to keep important dates | thinking, “I’m just a teen, you? If so why? | How is using audio equipment going to affect our generation’s future? | stay and find someplace quieter or 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: 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/earphones.” 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 headphones can help reduce damage to your ears.