

## **Why does my child dislike loud sounds?**

It is very common for children to dislike loud sounds, especially if they have not heard the sound before.

Many children will become upset, anxious, or cover their ears if there is an unexpected noise. Many children don't like sounds such as vacuum cleaners, hand dryers, sirens, noisy parties, cutlery, chewing and even some school situations.

Young children may not be able to describe their fear in words. They might cry, scream, hit, bite, or refuse to go to certain place. A strong dislike of everyday sounds can sometimes be called hyperacusis.

## **What causes hyperacusis?**

We don't know what causes hyperacusis, in most children they simply do not like the sound. Sometimes it can be triggered by a loud or unpleasant noise that takes them by surprise, like a firework or a balloon popping. This can lead to a fear or phobia of loud noise. The child may then want to stay away from some situations.

## **What can I do to help my child?**

Trying these tips should help your child learn that sound isn't something to be afraid of and that sound can be fun:

- When your child becomes upset by a noise, move him/her away from the sound slightly and comfort them.

- Try to explain what the sound is.
- Don't force your child to stay somewhere that upsets them, because this can make them worse in the long term. You can get them used to noises gradually, with time and care.
- Sometimes your child will be less scared if they can control the sound themselves. Let them switch the vacuum cleaner on and off, turn music on and off, and play with noisy toys.
- Record sounds that your child doesn't like, maybe on your phone. Play them back quietly at first and then getting louder. Try letting your child control the loudness, while explaining what the sound is, maybe with pictures or videos. Try making it into a game.
- Don't keep the home too quiet. Maybe have music on and let them play with noisy toys.
- Getting plenty of sleep really helps
- Talk to relatives and staff at nursery or school. It helps if everyone who sees your child understands how to help them.
- Try not to use earplugs or ear defenders as it can make the problem worse (except maybe for a fireworks display which might really be too loud for comfort).

## What will happen in the future?

Studies show that hyperacusis tends to be less of a problem after the age of 5-6 years. Most children find that the problem gets less with time. It can sometimes get worse again at times of stress or upset, like exams.

If the problem is not getting better with time, speak to your GP, Audiologist or ENT Specialist for further advice.

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If you require this information in large print or another language please contact the audiology team. Updated October 2018

Any concerns about the way your appointment was conducted?

Contact:

Patient Liaison advice service (PALS):

RSH- 01743261691 PRH- 01952 282888



The Shrewsbury and  
Telford Hospital  
NHS Trust

# HYPERACUSIS

This booklet is for children and their parents who have a high sensitivity to loud sounds (Hyperacusis)

