

# American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

**Making effective communication, a human right, accessible and achievable for all.**

ShareThis

## Hearing Protection



Hearing protection includes ear plugs and earmuffs that are made to reduce the intensity or loudness of sound.

**Ear plugs** are placed into the ear canal so that they totally block the canal. They come in various pre-made shapes and sizes, or they can be custom-made by taking an impression of the ear. Ear plugs can reduce noise 15-30 dB depending on how they are made and fit.

**Ear muffs** fit completely over both ears. Again, they must fit tightly so that sound is blocked from entering the ears. Like earplugs, muffs can reduce noise 15-30 dB depending on how they are made and fit.

**Ear plugs and ear muffs** can be used together to achieve even greater sound reduction. Use of ear plugs and ear muffs is recommended when noise exposure is particularly high

*Cotton in the ears is not considered appropriate ear protection. It cannot effectively block the ear canal. It has been found to reduce sound by only 5-7 dB.*

©1997-2009 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association