Hearing loss is a common problem of getting older, but exposure to loud noises can affect people of all ages. One in five Americans over the age of 12 have hearing loss. Loud environments at work or leisure events, such as concerts and ball games, or the use of listening devices can all cause permanent damage to the sensitive structures of the inner ear.

Use ear plugs in a noisy workplace and limit exposure to excessively loud events and environments to help prevent hearing loss at a young age and slow its progression as we get older. Regular screenings can also detect problems early.

Thank you for joining us on a Minute of Health with CDC.

For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.