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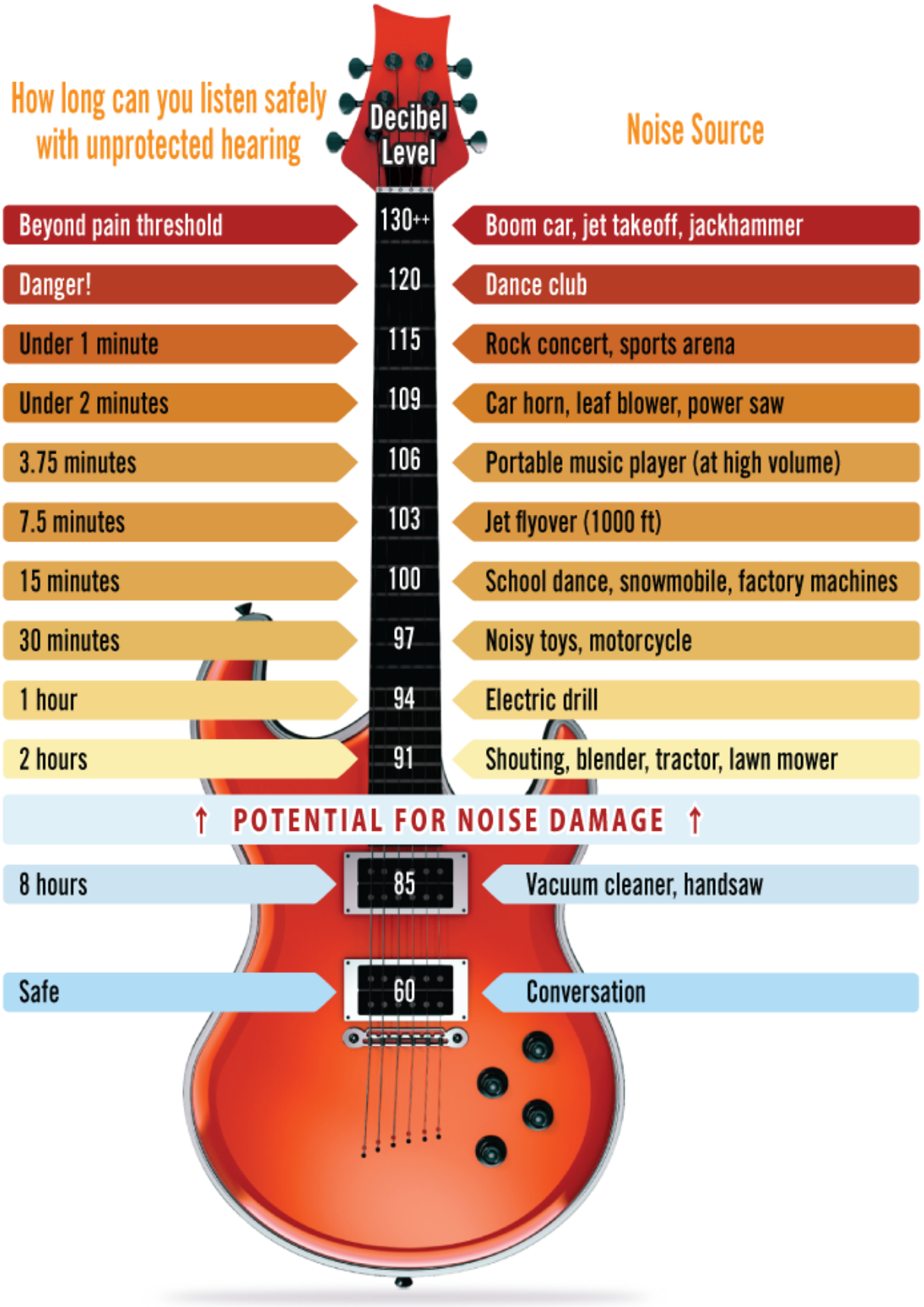
The Hearing Foundation of Canada – Sound Sense

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The Hearing Foundation of Canada

Due to the aging population and an increase to noise exposure, the prevalence of hearing loss is steadily increasing. An unprecedented 1 in 5 teenagers today are showing some degree of hearing loss, a 30% increase from the previous decade. It is widely speculated that this is due to increased noise exposure from digital technology, personal communication devices and noisy leisure activities, among other influences. Since 2006, The Hearing Foundation of Canada (THFC) has delivered Sound Sense/Oui à l'ouïe, a bilingual program that teaches children in Grades 4 to 6 about the dangers of noise exposure, how to protect their hearing while providing take-home materials to bring the message to the whole family.

THFC's Sound Sense is a unique and award winning program that educates children about noise-induced hearing loss and how to prevent it from happening to them. Sound Sense is currently being delivered in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia, to over 25,000 children every year. The program has proven effectiveness, and was described as "Best Practice for Youth Audiology" in a report by Dr. Kellie Leitch to the Government of Canada in 2007.



Trained presenters, including university and college students, audiologists, speech-language pathologists, retired and supply teachers, classical musicians, people with hearing loss, and hearing health advocates teach the following prevention fundamentals:

- Turn down the volume
- Limit listening or exposure time to loud noise and give ears breaks

- Increase distance from the source of loud noise
- Use protective devices in noisy environments
- For personal listening devices, use over-the-ear headphones or sound limiting ear buds

The Sound Sense program opens up the world of sound to children. By talking about their hearing and sharing the sounds they love, children realize the important role their hearing plays in their everyday lives.

Since the Sound Sense program was launched in 2006, it has grown. Reaching over 300,000 children as well as their teachers and family members have been reached. In order to effectively mitigate early hearing loss on a national scale, we believe that we must deliver our prevention message to every child in Canada, to ensure hearing for all.

The feedback from Sound Sense participants has been overwhelmingly positive. The children who have received the Sound Sense presentations have been very enthusiastic about this health message. We continually learn that they have enjoyed the way in which the program was delivered, that they appreciated gaining new insights into how vulnerable their ears can be and they loved receiving the gift of ear plugs. They have said:

“It’s a good thing you came before I damaged my hearing, because I always listen to my stuff (music, etc…) really loud so does my big sister. She turns the volume all the way up when my mom and dad are away. Thank you for coming!”

“I really enjoyed your presentation. I couldn’t believe that you could lose your hearing just by listening to sound itself! I always thought it was age that effected hearing, but now I know what effects hearing. Thank you for the presentation!"

Sound Sense is a proven program that increases children’s awareness of dangerous noise levels, as well as their potential for adopting safe listening practices that can prevent permanent hearing loss.

Contact us for more information on providing Sound Sense to your children.

The Hearing Foundation of Canada, (THFC) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating the devastating effects of hearing loss on Canadians by promoting prevention, early diagnosis, leading edge medical research and successful intervention.

Toll-free: 866-432-7968 info@soundsense.ca