



Cicadas and Chemo-Induced Hearing Loss

Cicadas "bug" many with loud chirps that last a few weeks every 17 years. They aren't a threat to humans; they don't bite or sting. Mostly cicadas are just a nuisance as they rise above ground, singing their piercing song for a few weeks and feast on sap from trees and woody shrubs. But for children who have incurred chemo-induced hearing loss, vulnerable hearing systems are at risk for further loss.

As one of the loudest insects in the world, the cicada mating call is around 90 decibels. That's louder than a rock concert - and it lasts for about three weeks! For parents of children with chemo-induced hearing loss, and survivors, it is important to be aware of the lasting impact this sound can have, and take steps to protect delicate hearing systems.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) provides some sound advice to families during this time:

- If your child utilizes digital hearing aids for treatment of hearing loss, there is a maximum output limiter that will not further amplify already loud sounds to unsafe levels, but it is advised to **speak with your audiologist to ensure hearing aide programming is safe.**
- If you live near a wooded area where a large amount of cicadas are expected to be present, it is best to ensure a safe distance between your family and the loud cicada area. It is important to remember that with **every doubling of distance the listener stands away from the sound source, the sound level drops 6 dB.** For example, if the noise is 90 dB one foot from the sound source, at 2 feet the sound drops to 84 dB, then at 4 feet it further declines to 78 dB and so on.
- If you plan to be outside during this period, **it is recommended to use hearing protection devices to further shield your child's hearing** for safety. For more information on types of protection:
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise/choose.html>

For more information on cicadas, visit:

-<https://leader.pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/leader.ftr1.09122004.3>
-<https://www.noisyplanet.nidcd.nih.gov/have-you-heard/cicadas-noise-motorcycle-noise>



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PREP4Gold thanks ASHA for providing this important information for families impacted by childhood cancer.

Establishing prevention-minded care for children with cancer