

SALUS UNIVERSITY GEORGE S. OSBORNE COLLEGE OF AUDIOLOGY

CAN ATTENDING AN NFL GAME BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEARING?

Salus University College of Audiology Offers Fan-friendly Advice as Eagles-Saints Clash Nears

Philadelphia, PA (Jan. 2, 2014) - This NFL season has seen unprecedented competition among fan bases vying for the crown of loudest stadium venue. Dr. Victor H. Bray, Dean of the Salus University George S. Osborne College of Audiology, and his colleagues, are concerned about potential hearing damage amid the increasingly deafening drumbeat to rock the house on the road to the Super Bowl. "The decibel levels at most football stadiums are beginning to resemble NASCAR races, so it makes good sense for fans to bring and use hearing protection. As a general rule, if a fan has to shout to be heard by the person next to them, that's a sure sign that it's loud enough to warrant the use of earplugs or headphones," he suggests. "Use of foam earplugs, especially early in life, is easy and relatively inexpensive compared to the reliance on hearing aids later in life." Dr. Bray, whose colleague Dr. Thomas Thunder, concentrates his clinical practice on hearing-related occupational health and safety, reminds that hearing loss associated with loud-sound environments is usually easily preventable by taking precautions. However, once it occurs, hearing loss is also irreversible. Dr. Thunder adds, "Unfortunately, hearing damage typically occurs without pain and we are not aware of the overexposure until it is too late."

PRE-GAME TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR HEARING

PROVIDED BY SALUS UNIVERSITY GEORGE S. OSBORNE COLLEGE OF AUDIOLOGY

- Use hearing protection in high-noise environments such as loud sports venues where earplugs should be as prevalent as the use of sunglasses and sunscreen in bright sunlight. They are quick and easy to use and will not diminish the game experience.
- Look for foam earplugs preferably with a Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) of 30 or higher. They can typically be purchased in sets of 10 at drugstores and hardware stores.

While prevention is the best cure when it comes to hearing health, it is also important to be aware of the signs of possible hearing damage.

- If you notice a slight change in hearing ability (a threshold shift) or the presence of ringing in your ears (tinnitus), those are signs that you most likely have sustained some hearing damage.
- Repeated overexposure to loud sounds, starting with temporary threshold shift and temporary tinnitus, can lead to permanent hearing loss, often associated with permanent tinnitus.

It is strongly recommended that you promptly seek professional care if you experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- 1) a ringing in your ears
- 2) a feeling of pressure in the ears,
- 3) sounds like cotton is in the ears,
- 4) the need to turn up the volume on the car radio, or
- 5) speech sounds muffled.

Dr. Bray, whose office is on Salus' main campus in Elkins Park just outside Philadelphia, and Dr. Thunder, based in Palatine, Illinois, are available (in person or via teleconference/online/satellite) to discuss hearing safety, including precautionary measures for fans and workers – including players - in indoor and outdoor venues.

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