



Contact Information:

Jessica Mikulski

Phone: 1-703-535-3762

Email: newsroom@entnet.org

For Immediate Release:

May 3, 2010

**American Academy of Otolaryngology –Head and Neck Surgery
Honors May as Better Hearing and Speech Month**

Nation's ENT Doctors Offer Tips for Preventing Noise-Induced Hearing Loss

Alexandria, VA –Nationwide, 10 million Americans suffer from irreversible noise-induced hearing loss, with 30 million more exposed to dangerous noise levels each day. For children and teenagers, one of the simplest ways that they can acquire noise-induced hearing loss is by listening to loud music or video games. To raise awareness of this common and preventable health issue, the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) honors May as Better Hearing and Speech Month.

A 2009 survey by the AAO-HNS found that 4 in 5 Americans are concerned about hearing loss due to ear buds. The survey showed that hearing loss is a top medical concern among parents, higher than concerns about asthma, food allergies, or exposure to tobacco smoke. More than 90 percent of parents are very concerned about hearing loss in their children.

In recognition of Better Hearing and Speech Month, otolaryngologists (also known as ENT doctors) recommend these tips to ensure that parents know how to protect their families from noise-induced hearing loss:

- Encourage your children to take breaks from long periods of listening to music.
- Give your child ear plugs or ear muffs if they are involved in a loud activity.
- Remind your child to turn down the sound of their music.
- Teach your child to avoid the noise (walk away) if they feel it is too loud.

For children and teenagers, some activities that can risk damaging hearing include: playing with noisy toys, band instruments, and video games; listening to personal music players and stereos at high volumes; attending concerts and movies; operating lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and power tools; and riding off-road vehicles and snowmobiles. As a general rule, noise may damage your hearing if you are at arm's length from it, or have to shout to make yourself heard.

If you are concerned about possible hearing loss in your child, have them examined by an otolaryngologist – head and neck surgeon. For more information about protecting your hearing, or to read about hearing loss in children, please visit www.entnet.org.

###

About the AAO-HNS

The American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (www.entnet.org), one of the oldest medical associations in the nation, represents nearly 12,000 physicians and allied health professionals who specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the ears, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. The Academy serves its members by facilitating the advancement of the science and art of medicine related to otolaryngology and by representing the specialty in governmental and socioeconomic issues. The organization's vision: "Empowering otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons to deliver the best patient care."