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NEWS

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## **New health warning for mp3 users with pacemakers**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (Nov. 12, 2008) – Aging baby boomers now have another health scare to worry about: New research shows that mp3 player headphones can cause potentially dangerous interference with pacemakers and implanted defibrillators in nearly 1 in 4 heart patients.

For safe use, headphones must be at least 1.2 inches or 3 centimeters from the implanted devices, according to findings released this week during the American Heart Association 2008 Scientific Sessions in New Orleans.

“In other words, don’t put your headphones in your front shirt or jacket pocket or hang them around your neck if you have a pacemaker or implantable cardioverter-defibrillator,” says Thomas Mattioni, MD, director of arrhythmia services at Scottsdale Healthcare.

The problem lies with the magnets inside the earbuds or headphones, according to Dr. Mattioni, who also conducted research into the affects of magnets on pacemakers and defibrillators several years ago.

“Headphones have magnets in them, and magnets can cause interference with the function of these implantable devices for the heart,” explained Dr. Mattioni. The magnets could potentially cause interference with the pacemaker or defibrillator which prevents them from performing functions to keep the heart beating properly.”

Dr. Mattioni cautions mp3 users with pacemakers to be cognizant of the earbuds’ location and keep them away from the chest when not listening to their player.

And he noted that mp3 players are not exclusive to younger generations. “Many if not most of my patients use iPods or mp3 players,” said Dr. Mattioni.

The headphone study was conducted by researchers at Beth Israel Medical Center in Boston, Mass.

Scottsdale Healthcare ([www.shc.org](http://www.shc.org)) is the not-for-profit parent organization of the Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn, Scottsdale Healthcare Shea and Scottsdale Healthcare Thompson Peak hospitals, Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center, Scottsdale Clinical Research Institute, Scottsdale Healthcare Home Health Services and Scottsdale Healthcare Community Health Services.

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