



Diabetes & Hearing Loss

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Ask the Expert & Read my Quips

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Sound Bytes

INFORMATION FOR YOUR EARS

Diabetes and Hearing Loss

Diabetes is a metabolic disorder characterized by elevated blood sugar levels. An individual with diabetes does not produce or use insulin correctly. Approximately 21 million people have diabetes and the number of individuals with diabetes increases year after year. Diabetes can go undiagnosed and is characterized by weight loss, increased thirst, blurry vision, fatigue and frequent urination.

A study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine in 2008 and performed by the National Institutes of Health, suggests that individuals with diabetes are at a greater risk for hearing loss than individuals who do not have diabetes. It is believed that diabetes may lead to hearing loss by damaging the nerves and blood vessels of the inner ear according to an article in NIH News. The damage typically causes high frequency permanent hearing loss. The data suggests that the association between hearing loss and diabetes can be evident as early as age 30, placing a younger

individual at a greater risk for hearing loss. The incidence of hearing loss then rises to 70% in individuals with diabetes over the age of 70.



Unfortunately the statistics of diabetes related hearing loss among diabetics is not well known. Many individuals with diabetes do not ask for a hearing test and thus live with undiagnosed hearing loss for quite some time. If you or anyone you know has diabetes, it is important to have your hearing tested.

References:
www.healthyhearing.com/content/articles/Hearing-loss/Causes/43659-Diabetes-and-hearing-loss &
www.nih.gov/news/health/jun2008/niddk-16.htm



ASK *the* EXPERT

Mary Fox, MD

Q Can smoking increase my risk of hearing loss?

A Research suggests that smokers may have a 70% higher risk of hearing loss than their non-smoking peers. Non-smokers who are exposed to second hand smoke in their household are also at an increased risk of hearing loss.

Q Why does smoking increase my risk of hearing loss?

A The exact link between smoking and hearing loss remains unknown. It is suggested that the chemicals in cigarettes may impact the transmission of the nerve impulse, affect the oxygen in the ear and cause damage to the sensory cells.

Q What can I do if I am concerned about my hearing?

A Evaluation of your hearing by an audiologist is important to determine if a hearing loss exists. The audiologist will determine the type and degree of hearing loss and identify if there are medical concerns that need to be addressed by an ENT physician.

Sources: "Cigarette Smoking and Hearing Loss - The Epidemiology of Hearing Loss Study", Journal of the American Medical Association, June 1998, vol. 279, and "Serum Cotinine Level and Incident Hearing Loss: A Case-Control Study," Archives of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery, November 2004, Vol. 130, p 1260-1264.

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REFERRAL *program*



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