



DIABETES DIAGNOSIS CONNECTED TO HEARING



Mt. Harrison Audiology

and Hearing Aids LLC

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Research shows that diabetics are twice as likely to have hearing loss as those without diabetes. Just as patients with diabetes are encouraged to have their eyes and feet checked regularly, they should have an annual hearing exam to monitor their ears for possible hearing loss.

The Link Between Diabetes and Hearing Loss

Diabetes can cause blurry vision, hunger, thirst and fatigue; a lesser known associated condition is hearing loss. In fact, a recent study showed that even those with prediabetes have a 30 percent greater risk of hearing loss than those with normal blood glucose.

This study is alarming to many otolaryngologists and audiologists because there is no recommendation for hearing loss screenings in a diabetes care regimen. Awareness is critical in increasing screening and discovering diabetes patients who suffer from hearing loss. Many doctors fail to recommend a hearing test at the annual checkup of diabetes patients. It's important for those with diabetes to take an active role in their health care and seek treatment for any associated conditions they may be at risk for.

Ask the Experts

"Hearing loss may be an under-recognized complication of diabetes," senior author Catherine Cowie, Ph.D. said. "As diabetes becomes more common, the disease may become a more significant contributor to hearing loss. Our study found a strong and consistent link between hearing impairment and diabetes using a number of different outcomes."

The reason for this connection is not definitive, but some evidence is suggestive. The NIDCD study reports diabetes may lead to hearing loss by damaging the nerves and blood vessels of the inner ear.

Prevalence of Diabetes & Next Steps

Affecting nearly 21 million people in the United States, diabetes is a major cause of heart disease and stroke and the most common cause of blindness, kidney failure and lower limb amputations in adults. Prediabetes, which causes no symptoms, affects about 54 million adults in the United States.

This high incidence of pre-diabetes and the connection between dangerous associated conditions are encouraging many to evaluate their risk of developing diabetes. At Mt. Harrison Audiology and Hearing Aids, we recommend you ask your doctor if you think you might be pre-diabetic or if you suffer from diabetes and believe you may have the beginning stages of hearing loss.

Source: Cowie, C. (2008). Hearing loss is common in people with diabetes. National Institutes of Health.

CONSUMER NOTICES

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