

10 things you should know about hearing loss & your health

- 1 Hearing loss is tied to depression.** Research shows that hearing loss is associated with an increased risk of depression in adults of all ages, but is most pronounced in 18 to 69 year olds. Research also shows that the use of hearing aids may reduce depressive symptoms.)
- 2 Hearing loss and dementia are linked.** Research not only shows a connection between hearing loss and dementia, but a Johns Hopkins study of older adults found that hearing loss actually accelerates brain function decline. Some experts believe that interventions, like hearing aids, could potentially delay or prevent dementia. Research is ongoing.
- 3 Hearing loss is twice as common in people with diabetes.** Studies show that people with diabetes are twice as likely to have hearing loss. When broken down by age, one study showed that those 60 and younger are at greater risk.
- 4 Your hearing may say something about your heart.** Cardiovascular and hearing health are linked. Some experts say the inner ear is so sensitive to blood flow that it's possible that abnormalities in the cardiovascular system could be noted here earlier than in other less sensitive parts of the body.
- 5 Staying fit may also help your hearing.** Research on women's health shows that a higher level of physical activity is associated with a lower risk of hearing loss. Conversely, a higher body mass index (BMI) and larger waist circumference in women are each associated with a higher risk of hearing loss.
- 6 Hearing loss may put you at greater risk of falling.** A Johns Hopkins study showed that people in middle age (40 to 69) with even just mild hearing loss were nearly three times more likely to have a history of falling.
- 7 Hospitalization may be more likely for those with hearing loss.** Another Johns Hopkins study showed that hospitalization is more likely for older adults with hearing loss.
- 8 The risk of dying may be higher for older men with hearing loss.** A groundbreaking study found that men with hearing loss had an increased risk of mortality, but hearing aids made a difference. Men and women with hearing loss who used hearing aids—although older and with more severe hearing loss—had a significantly lower mortality risk than those with hearing loss who did not use hearing aids.
- 9 Hearing loss is tied to common pain relievers.** One study found that the regular use of aspirin, NSAIDs, or acetaminophen increases the risk of hearing loss in men, and the impact is larger on younger individuals. A separate study found that ibuprofen and acetaminophen are associated with an increased risk of hearing loss in women, with the link even stronger among women younger than 50.
- 10 Moderate chronic kidney disease is linked to hearing loss.** Research has shown moderate chronic kidney disease to be associated with an increased risk of hearing loss.