



El Dorado Hearing News

Patient Newsletter ♦ Summer 2011

Specialists in Hearing. Experts in Listening.

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15 Years Serving Tucson

Hearing Loss Is Common in People with Diabetes

Hearing loss is about twice as common in adults with diabetes compared to those who do not have the disease, according to a new study funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

“Hearing loss may be an under-recognized complication of diabetes. As diabetes becomes more common, the disease may become a more significant contributor to hearing loss,” said senior author Catherine Cowie, Ph.D., of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), who suggested that people with diabetes should consider having their hearing tested. “Our study found a strong and consistent link between hearing impairment and diabetes using a number of different outcomes.”

“This is the first study of a nationally representative sample of working age adults, 20 to 69 years old, and we found an association between diabetes and hearing impairment evident as early as ages 30 to 40.”

The researchers discovered the higher rate of hearing loss in those with diabetes after analyzing the results of hearing tests given to a nationally representative sample of adults in the United States. The test measured participants’ ability to hear low, middle, and high frequency sounds in both ears. The link between diabetes and hearing loss was evident across all frequencies, with a stronger association in the high frequency range. Mild or greater hearing impairment of low- or mid frequency sounds in the worse ear was about 21 percent in 399 adults with diabetes compared to about 9 percent in 4,741 adults without diabetes. For high frequency sounds, mild or greater hearing impairment in the worse ear was 54 percent in those with diabetes compared to 32 percent in those who did not have the disease.

Adults with pre-diabetes, whose blood glucose is higher than normal but not high enough for a diabetes diagnosis, had a 30 percent higher rate of hearing loss compared to those with normal blood sugar tested after an overnight fast.

The study, published early online June 17, 2008, in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, was conducted by researchers from the NIDDK, the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), components of the NIH, and Social & Scientific Systems, Inc., which provides support on public health topics to NIH and other government agencies.

The Impact of Untreated Hearing Loss on Household Income

by Sergei Kochkin, Ph.D.

In a survey of more than 40,000 households utilizing the National Family Opinion panel, **hearing loss was shown to negatively impact household income on-average up to \$12,000 per year depending on the degree of hearing loss.** However, the use of hearing instruments was shown to mitigate the effects of hearing loss by 50%. For America’s 24 million hearing impaired who do not use hearing instruments, the impact of untreated hearing loss is quantified to be in excess of \$100 billion annually.

According to a recent national survey by the Better Hearing Institute, more than 31 million Americans in non-institutional settings admit to a hearing loss. Only 37% are at retirement age. The majority are either at school age or in the work force. Only 23% of hard-of-hearing Americans are being helped with hearing instruments, which are the necessary treatment for 90-95% of people with hearing loss.

Most employment situations require verbal communication in order to effectively engage in commerce and in dealing with the public; effective hearing is also critical to assure safety on the job. Without aided hearing, the hearing-impaired individual can be expected to suffer losses in compensation due to underemployment, may make mistakes on the job, experience higher rates of unemployment and in general may experience an overall reduction in quality of life, which may negatively impact job performance.

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EL DORADO AUDIOLOGY: ACTUAL PATIENT STORIES

“I had been noticing since the beginning of the year that I was not hearing very well at work or socially. My reading of lips was not working for me anymore. El Dorado Audiology put me in digital hearing aids — I was so overwhelmed by how clearly I could hear my husband’s voice, I just started crying. I believe I’ve never been able to hear like that before. And of course, I would not leave without those wonderful hearing aids. I want everyone to know how effective digital hearing aids are and how they have increased my happiness. My life is so much more now that I can hear. I will always be grateful to El Dorado Audiology.”

— *Debbie W.*

“Although I had working hearing aids, at the age of 94, I decided to go for the new technology. You fitted me with a pair of Widex Inteo units, and what a revelation! I am now hearing sounds that I haven’t heard in years. My next attendance at a symphony concert became a special delight. In addition to the clarity, there is no feedback, nor am I bothered by background noise when I’m in a restaurant or other public place. I was also pleased by your friendly, professional and gracious service. All in all, it has been a very positive experience.”

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Now Offering The Latest **Wireless Technology** For Hassle-Free Listening

You can now pair hearing devices straight to your cell phone or TV without any hassle. Instead of struggling to hear the TV from far away, the sound is delivered directly into your ears. The result is clearer, more natural sound so can enjoy your favorite TV shows and phone conversations with greater ease. Once you experience this technology, you will never go back. **The sound is AMAZING!**