

Diabetes and hearing health: What's the connection?

More than 1.7 million Australians have diabetes, while 280 new cases are diagnosed every day. In fact, many of the people we see in our hearing clinics each day have diabetes. This is because hearing loss is twice as common in people with diabetes.

People with diabetes can have hearing loss across all sound frequencies, but especially within the high frequency range. Research published by medical journal Diabetes Care shows that as many as two-thirds of people with diabetes had high-frequency hearing impairment. High frequency sounds can include women's and children's voices, birdsong, the microwave beeping, plus certain consonants in speech such as 's', 'h' and 'f'.

Why the increased risk of hearing loss for people with diabetes?

It's thought to be similar to how other diabetic complications can develop. Elevated blood glucose levels over a long time can damage blood vessels and reduce blood flow to various areas of the body. This can damage the delicate structures of the inner ear and result in hearing loss.

How can someone with diabetes protect their hearing?

To help avoid hearing loss in diabetes, as per other complications, specialists recommend good blood glucose control and to keep HbA1c within the recommended range. A healthy lifestyle that includes exercise and a nutritious diet can help keep HbA1c levels lower and improve management of daily blood glucose levels.

For patients with diabetes, we encourage a visit to an audiologist to first have a full hearing diagnostic assessment, and then annually from there on in to monitor any hearing changes.

Treating hearing loss through cutting-edge technology

The difference hearing aids could make is life changing. And, hearing aid technology has come a long way - those old whistling bulky appliances are a thing of the past! Today's hearing aids are very comfortable and discreet, and some even sit right in the ear canal making them completely invisible.



We love to help our patients with diabetes lead vibrant lives through better hearing health.

Our hearing health specialists can offer a FREE hearing health check.

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For more information, contact your local ihear clinic on **1300 650 250**