

Good hearing health as a fall prevention technique

Has your patient experienced a fall or at risk of falls, trips and slips? Researchers from NeuRA conclude that falls are a major health and safety issue for Australians aged 65+, with one in three suffering a fall each year. In fact, falls account for around 75% of total injury-related hospital admissions for older people.

Hearing loss is also a major health issue, as the third most common chronic condition in Australians aged 65+. By the age of 70, nearly three-quarters of Australians will experience age-related hearing loss. Unfortunately, many people wait a long time before seeking treatment for their hearing loss, leaving it to worsen and even lead to other health conditions.

How does hearing loss contribute to falls?

The exact reasons why hearing loss causes an increased falling risk are unclear, but the statistics suggest that the two are indeed linked. Researchers from Johns Hopkins Medicine in the US combined the results of several large surveys to conclude that people with mild hearing loss were nearly three times more likely to have experienced a fall.

The simplest explanation for the link between hearing loss and falls is that usually the eyes and ears work together to detect trip and fall hazards, like a fallen broom, discarded toy or liquid spill. Untreated hearing loss means we're relying too heavily on one sense, which isn't enough.

It's also thought that living with untreated hearing loss requires more brain power to make sense of the world around us. This can divert resources from important tasks like balance control.

Hearing loss has also been independently linked to walking difficulties.

Treat hearing loss as part of a fall prevention strategy

Not only is it great practice to treat hearing loss anyway, but it may help prevent your patients falling in their home or environment. Falls can be nasty, leading to time in hospital or away from the people they love and the things they love doing.

Hearing aid technology can help your patient regain quality of life and also protect against cognitive decline and diseases like Alzheimer's and dementia.



To help your patients return to – or maintain – a healthy and active life, our hearing health specialists offer **FREE** hearing checks.

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