



Kent Hearing

Hearing Loss

The hidden risks and how to reduce them



What can I do to limit these risks?



You can limit the risks associated with hearing loss by:

- Having your hearing checked by a fully qualified audiologist every 1-2 years, or straight away if you are struggling to hear properly.
- Protecting your ears by limiting exposure to loud noises
- Maintaining a healthy diet so that you control blood glucose/sugar levels
- Seeking help if you have any of the following symptoms of hearing loss: tinnitus, difficulty in hearing others clearly, having to turn up the volume on the TV or radio, asking for phrases or questions to be repeated, struggling to hear in background noise or losing your balance

If you already have hearing aids:

- Follow recommendations from a qualified audiologist
- Wear your hearing aids whenever possible - all day, everyday is best!
- Have an annual hearing test to monitor your condition and update your treatment plan
- Make sure your hearing aids are checked annually
- Control your blood glucose levels

For more information or to book a hearing test or consultation with Dr Carling please call us on 01732 525912 or email info@kenthearing.com

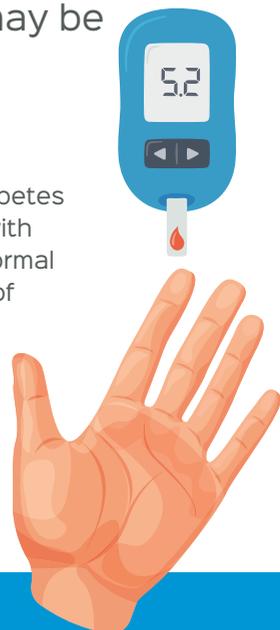
Why it's important to take care of your hearing

For most patients with hearing loss, early diagnosis, expert advice and the fitting of the right hearing aids for their condition can deliver substantial improvement to their hearing and quality of life.

However, if left untreated, hearing loss can have a major impact on many important aspects of both our mental and physical health. This leaflet provides you with some information about the links between hearing loss and dementia, diabetes, and other conditions that may be affected by loss of hearing.

Hearing loss and diabetes

Hearing loss is twice as common in people who have diabetes as in people of the same age who do not. Even people with prediabetes (who's blood sugar levels are higher than normal but don't have type 2 diabetes) have a 30% higher rate of hearing loss than people with normal blood sugar levels. This is because high blood sugar levels can damage the small blood vessels and nerves in the inner ear, which reduces the capability to hear. Low blood sugar over time can also damage how nerve signals travel from the inner ear to the brain. Both types of nerve damage may lead to hearing loss. *****



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Hearing loss and dementia

Several studies have found important links between hearing loss and dementia.

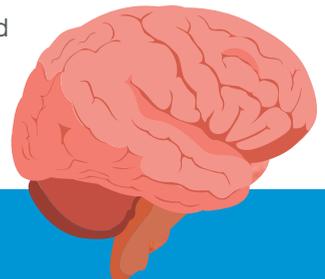
A recent study by John Hopkins expert Frank Lin* concluded that:

- **Mild hearing loss doubled dementia risk**
- **Moderate loss tripled the risk of dementia**
- **Those with severe hearing impairment were five times more likely to develop dementia**

It also identified that hearing loss can contribute to social isolation and that not being with people as much, and therefore not engaging in conversation as often, can in turn contribute to dementia.

The 2017 Lancet Commission** highlighted hearing impairment as one of 12 risk factors for dementia. It also identified that wearing hearing aids appeared to reduce the excess risk of dementia and that reducing risk factors, for example, by wearing hearing aids and protecting ears from excessive noise exposure, may prevent or delay up to 40% of dementias.

More recently, a 2021 study led by University of Oxford researchers on over 82,000 participants, found that difficulty hearing spoken conversations is associated with up to a 91% increased risk of dementia.***

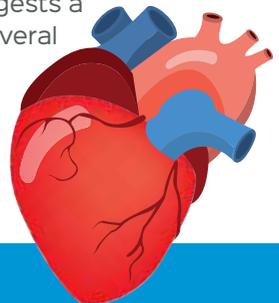




Other health risks associated with hearing loss

Hearing loss has also been linked to several other conditions, including:

- **Falls and balance:** Our ears pick up subtle cues that help with our balance. Hearing loss can mute these signals and make the brain work harder when processing sound. This may interfere with some of the mental processing we need to walk safely and result in falls ****
- **Social isolation and loneliness:** Not being able to hear properly limits our ability to interact and have conversations with even our closest friends and family. This can often result in feelings of isolation and loneliness
- **Anxiety and depression:** Being unable to hear the voices of loved ones or colleagues, a favourite piece of music or familiar sounds can cause anxiety. This may increase the risk of suffering from feelings of isolation and depression
- **Heart disease:** While there is not a direct causal link between heart disease and hearing loss, a large body of evidence suggests a relationship between the two. The ear is supplied by several small arteries and requires a sufficient and rich blood flow to maintain proper function. It is believed that cardiovascular disease can reduce blood flow to the ear causing damage to different parts of the auditory system and result in sensorineural hearing loss *****





At Kent Hearing our aim is to help our patients improve their hearing and communication in all listening environments. We provide expert advice, personalised care and the most suitable hearing technologies for each patients' individual communication needs. Our services include:

- Earwax removal using microsuction
- A full range of diagnostic services
- Hearing aids
- Custom devices
- Tinnitus
- Children's hearing



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We look forward to seeing you

*Source: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/the-hidden-risks-of-hearing-loss>

**Source: [https://www.thelancet.com/article/S0140-6736\(20\)30367-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/article/S0140-6736(20)30367-6/fulltext)

*** Source: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2021-07-21-difficulty-hearing-speech-could-be-risk-factor-dementia>

****Source: *Source: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/the-hidden-risks-of-hearing-loss>

**** Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/diabetes-hearing-loss.html>

***** Source: <https://www.audiology.org/consumers-and-patients/hearing-and-balance/heart-disease-and-hearing-loss/>

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