



HEARING SERVICES

CONNECTICUT EYE CONSULTANTS P.C.



WHY A BASELINE HEARING TEST IS IMPORTANT

Having your hearing tested could simply serve as a baseline comparison for the future or, the results may indicate a health related risk that you are not aware of. Test results can indicate a medically correctible issue, such as an ear infection, wax impaction, otosclerosis, or acoustic neuroma. A hearing test could also indicate risk factors for underlying health issues that may be contributing to degradation in hearing, or that hearing loss is causative of an illness such as depression. Even a mild hearing loss can be an indicator of something more sinister than simply reduced hearing.

Hearing loss can indicate risk of underlying medical conditions

Cardiovascular - A growing body of research shows that low-frequency hearing loss is, in fact, a marker that may predict the presence or potential development of cardiovascular disease.

It is important to keep your primary physician informed of any hearing loss, especially at the lower frequencies, because it could be a harbinger of an as of yet undiagnosed cardio or cerebrovascular disorder.

Dementia – Seniors with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain their hearing. A study regarding cognitive decline performed at Johns Hopkins University by Frank Lin, M.D., PHD also gives some urgency to treating hearing loss rather than ignoring it. "If you want to address hearing loss well," Lin says, "you want to do it sooner rather than later. If hearing loss is potentially contributing to these differences we're seeing on MRI, you want to treat it before these brain structural changes take place."

Depression: Previous studies of older adults who use hearing aids have shown a reduction in depression and improved quality of life. Another study by the National Council on Aging found that people who have hearing loss but did not use hearing aids reported sadness, anxiety, worry, reduced social involvement, emotional turmoil, and insecurity. This is not to say that one will absolutely have depression if one has hearing loss (or vice versa), but it is worth consideration for those who have hearing loss to consider that treatment could be a first step in alleviating or addressing symptoms of depression. Quality of life can be improved in those with hearing loss if depression is identified; however, the first step is identifying hearing loss!

Increased risk of falling: Hearing loss decreases awareness of surrounding environment and increases cognitive load. In turn, this raises the potential for falls. Lead researchers reported that people with mild hearing loss (25 decibels) were nearly three times as likely to have a history of falling. Every additional 10 dB of lost hearing increased the likelihood of falling by 1.4. Even after other factors (age, sex, race, cardiovascular disease and vestibular function) were considered, the findings held true.

Unaddressed hearing loss can result in a weakened auditory system that loses the ability to decipher sound with the accuracy of a normal hearing individual even with hearing aids.

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