

Dear Providers

MAKE A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHY HEARING!

Healthy hearing should make the list of ways to improve your patients overall health. Sadly, hearing loss is an “invisible” disease it is often overlooked by healthcare providers and the individuals themselves until the damage is so severe that one-on-one communication is difficult and frustrating.

AT GOOD SOUND AUDIOLOGY, OUR 2015 NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION IS TO INCREASE AWARENESS TO THE COGNITIVE IMPLICATIONS OF PROLONGED, UNAMPLIFIED THAT CORRELATES WITH OTHER MEDICAL CONDITIONS, i.e. DIABETES.

Diabetes is metabolic disease that can lead to vascular and neurologic degeneration. Healthy hearing is extremely dependent on the health of the small blood vessels that supply the nutrients to the cochlea, or inner ear, and the nerves that supply the speech signal to the brain for processing. Therefore, **any decline** in health of the small blood vessels to the inner ear will impair your patients' ability to hear and understand speech clearly. One study concluded that sensorineural hearing loss was more common in patients with diabetes and the severity was correlated “with the progression of the disease as reflected in serum creatinine”. (Kakarlapudi, Venkata, Robert Sawyer, and Hinrich Staecker. "The effect of diabetes on sensorineural hearing loss." *Otology & Neurotology* 24.3 (2003): 382-386.) Additionally, any decline in the nerve function from the inner ear to the temporal lobes will provide a distorted message. This will lead the brain to have to work harder to process the speech sounds. Your patients will not only have elevated hearing thresholds, as another study concluded, patients with type 2 diabetes will have significantly worse speech discrimination scores when compared to nondiabetic patients. (Çayönü, Melih, et al. "Hearing Loss Related with Type 2 Diabetes in an Elderly Population." *Journal of International Advanced Otology* 10.1 (2014).

Untreated hearing loss severely impacts your patients' communication in relationships, their sense of control, emotional stability, and their physical health (www.betterhearing.org). As the New Year rolls on, we encourage you to recommend a hearing evaluation for your patients with diabetes. **Remember ask your patient “when was your last hearing test?”** NEVER ask your patient “how's your hearing?”

Thank you for allowing us to participate in the care of your patients. Cheers to a happy and healthy new year! We look forward to helping your patients with better hearing!

Best Regards,

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