

Diabetes Mellitus

According to the CDC, over 9 percent of the U.S. population has diabetes and the prevalence of diabetes increases with age¹.

Diabetes mellitus is a disorder where the body has high blood sugar due to abnormal insulin. Insulin is a hormone that regulates blood sugar levels. Without the correct amount of insulin, the body is unable to properly metabolize carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. There are two types of diabetes:

- Type 1 diabetes occurs when the immune system destroys the pancreas cells that produce insulin. People with type I diabetes are insulin dependent, meaning that they must administer insulin injections daily. This is often referred to as juvenile diabetes as it is typically diagnosed in childhood. About 5-10 percent of the diabetic population has type 1 diabetes¹.
- Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body becomes insulin resistant, meaning that insulin is unable to effectively regulate blood sugar levels. This occurs due to environmental and genetic factors. Management typically includes changes in diet and lifestyle, exercise, and medication. Over 90 percent of the diabetic population has type 2 diabetes.

Uncontrolled diabetes results in long-term high blood pressure that can damage several parts of the body including the

heart, blood vessels, kidneys, nerves, and the eyes.

Diabetes and Hearing Loss

The relationship between diabetes and hearing loss has been studied over the years. Hearing loss is common in patients with diabetes, but the relationship between the two disorders is not clear. Some believe that elevated blood sugar may be damaging the blood vessels and inner ear structures leading to hearing loss. Also, patients with diabetes seem to be more at risk for sudden hearing loss. A sudden change in your hearing requires evaluation by an audiologist and otologist as soon as possible.

Role of Audiologists

Audiologists identify and diagnose the type and degree of hearing loss and work closely with physicians as an important part of the management team.

Think you may have a hearing loss? Click on the "Find an Audiologist" link at www.audiology.org to locate and set up an appointment with an audiologist in your area.

References

1. Diagnosed Diabetes. (n.d.). Retrieved August 24, 2017, from <https://gis.cdc.gov/grasp/diabetes/DiabetesAtlas.html>