

Too Much Noise: Bad for Your Ears and for Your Heart

We've long known that too much noise — too loud and for too long — damages our ears and our ability to hear.

But did you know that it also may pose a risk to your heart?

That's right. A growing body of [research](#) shows that people with long-term exposure to loud [noise](#) may be more likely to develop heart disease.

So what else do our heart and ears have in common?

Many studies show a tie between cardiovascular disease and hearing loss. In fact, researchers from [Wichita State University](#) conducted an analysis of 84 years of work from scientists worldwide on the connection between cardiovascular health and the ability to hear and understand what others are saying. Their work, which reviewed 70 scientific studies, confirmed a direct link.

In a separate [study](#), researchers went as far as to conclude that patients with low-frequency hearing loss should be regarded as at risk for cardiovascular events, and appropriate referrals should be considered.

“The inner ear is so sensitive to blood flow that it is possible that abnormalities in the cardiovascular system could be noted here earlier than in other less sensitive parts of the body,” according to David R. Friedland, MD, PhD, Professor and Vice-Chair of Otolaryngology and Communication Sciences at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, as quoted in a 2015 BHI [press release](#).

Other experts find the evidence so compelling that they say [the ear may be a window to the heart](#) and encourage collaboration among hearing care providers, cardiologists, and other healthcare professionals.

Did you know both our heart and ears are affected by some of the same lifestyle behaviors?

Just as exercise is good for your heart, research shows it's also good for your hearing. One [study](#) found that a higher level of physical activity is tied to a lower risk of hearing loss in women.

[Another](#) study revealed that smokers and passive smokers are more likely to suffer hearing loss.

A [third](#) found that regular fish consumption and higher intake of long-chain omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids—which are good for your heart—are associated with a lower risk of hearing loss in women.