

## March 27: Diabetes Alert Day – time to assess your risk

 a national strategic partner of  
**American Diabetes Association.**

HearPO, a National Strategic Partner of the American Diabetes Association, wants you to know about “Diabetes Alert Day,” Tuesday, March 27, 2012.

On this day, the American Diabetes Association urges people to self-assess their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by taking the “Diabetes Risk Test.” Diabetes is a serious disease that strikes nearly 26 million children and adults in the United States, and a quarter of them — about 7 million — do not even know they have it. An additional 79 million, or one in three American adults, have pre-diabetes, which puts them at a high risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

The test asks users to answer simple questions about weight, age, family history and other potential risks of developing pre-diabetes or type 2 diabetes. Those at a high risk are encouraged to talk to their healthcare provider. The test also offers preventive tips.

You can take the “Diabetes Risk Test,” free of charge, by visiting the Association’s Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/AmericanDiabetesAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/AmericanDiabetesAssociation)) or by calling 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383). Although Diabetes Alert Day is a one-day event, the “Diabetes Risk Test” is available year ‘round.

## How you can reduce your risk of hearing loss

Contrary to popular belief, a majority of people who have a hearing loss are under the age of 65, according to the Better Hearing Institute (BHI).

Furthermore, the BHI estimates that hearing loss affects more than 6 million Americans between the ages of 18 and 44. Nearly 1.5 million are of school age.

So, what causes hearing loss, if it isn’t necessarily the result of growing older? And can anything be done to prevent it?

**Exposure to excessive noise is one of the leading risk factors — and one that’s largely preventable.** Following are steps you can take to reduce your risks:

- If you work in a noisy environment, check with your employer to make sure your hearing is adequately protected, in compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations.
- Limit the time you’re exposed to noise. Even seemingly harmless sound sources can damage your hearing over an extended period of time.
- Wear hearing protection, such as ear plugs or muffs, when participating in high-noise activities. You can experience hearing damage immediately by shooting a gun and in as little as five to 10 minutes at a rock concert or sporting event.
- Turn down the volume on the TV, radio and stereo. Be extra cautious when listening to music on an iPod or other personal audio device, especially if you’re using “earbuds.”
- Buy quieter products, and reduce the number of noisy appliances running at the same time in your personal space.

### Other preventive measures

Some common medicines, such as antibiotics, aspirin, diuretics and chemotherapy drugs, may cause hearing loss. Ask your doctor or pharmacist whether any medications you’re taking could potentially affect your hearing, and inquire about the availability of less risky alternatives.

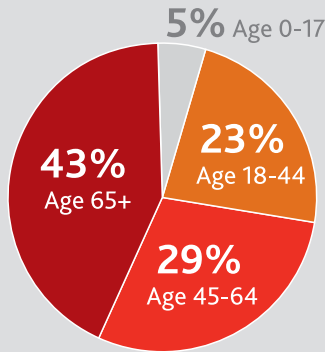
Lastly, consider supplementing your diet with omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, commonly found in fish oils. An article in *The Hearing Journal* reports on a possible link between taking fish oil and a reduced risk of hearing loss in adults. This conclusion is based on a study, conducted by the University of Sydney, which found that people who ate fish at least twice a week had a 42% lower risk of experiencing a hearing loss than those who ate less than one serving of fish per week.

**Once damage to your hearing occurs, it is usually irreversible. But this doesn’t mean it’s untreatable. Most hearing losses can be helped with today’s advanced hearing aids.**

If you suspect a hearing loss, we encourage you to receive a hearing evaluation from a HearPO provider. Call **1-888-HEARING (432-7464)** for an appointment.

Simply Call **1-888-HEARING (432-7464)** to learn more about the hearing program and to make your appointment.

## Who has hearing loss?



Source:

<http://ihcrp.georgetown.edu/agingsociety/pdfs/hearing.pdf>

## Did you know...

- **95% of Americans with hearing loss** could be successfully treated with hearing aids.
- **Successful treatment of hearing loss** with hearing aids is associated with greater earning power.
- **Hard of hearing people are less likely** to be discriminated against if they use hearing aids.
- **Part of the problem is** that hard of hearing people themselves do not understand their hearing loss.
- **9 of 10 hearing aid users** report improvements in their quality of life.

Resource: *Better Hearing Institute factoids*

## Tips for enjoying conversation at your favorite restaurant

Trying to have a conversation in a noisy place, such as a busy restaurant, can be a challenging proposition, to say the least.

If you have a hearing loss, it might seem impossible. Hearing-impaired people typically have trouble distinguishing high-frequency sounds (for example, the consonants in speech), while lower frequency sounds, such as the “dull roar” of a restaurant, come through all too loudly and clearly.

Following are eight tactics you can use, whether or not you’re hearing impaired, to maximize your communication abilities in the presence of background noise:

1. Position yourself face to face and within six feet of the speaker.
2. If possible, reduce, eliminate or move away from competing noises.
3. Try to choose a location where the speaker’s face is well illuminated.
4. In group situations, position yourself to see as many faces as possible.
5. Politely ask your companions not to speak with their mouths covered.
6. Ask others to speak more slowly. When people are in a hurry, they tend to skip important speech sounds.
7. Ask for clarification. For example: “I thought I heard you say you were leaving tomorrow. What time is your flight?”
8. If possible, continue your conversation somewhere with less noise. For example, ask your companion to join you on a walk.

As stated above, a hearing loss can compound the challenge of communicating in a loud environment. The good news: Certain hearing aid features can suppress background noise while enhancing speech sounds.

A HearPO provider can evaluate your situation and help you determine which hearing aid technologies are right for you. Call **1-888-HEARING (432-7464)** to make an appointment.

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