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New research indicates that diets high in omega-3 fatty acids may play a role in reducing age-related hearing loss.

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS AND FISH REDUCE AGE-RELATED HEARING LOSS RISK

Hearing loss, the most common sensory disorder, affects more than 36 million people in the United States.

In a recent study, researchers sought to identify modifiable risk factors that might prevent or slow the development of age-related hearing loss (presbycusis). One of the examined associations was between dietary intakes of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) and fish and the risk of hearing loss.

Subjects included 2,956 people (50+ years old) who were already participants in the Blue Mountains Hearing Study. PUFA and fish intake data were collected and calculated using food frequency questionnaires.

Subjects who had 2 or more servings of fish per week compared with participants who had less than one serving of fish per week had a 42% reduced risk of developing hearing loss. People who ate between 1 and 2 servings of fish per week also experienced a reduced risk of hearing loss.

The results of this study show that the risk of age-related hearing loss can be significantly reduced through regular fish intake and adequate dietary omega-3 fatty acids.

Gopinath B, Flood VM, Rohtchina E, McMahon CM, Mitchell P. Consumption of omega-3 fatty acids and fish and risk of age-related hearing loss. 2010. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Published online ahead of print, doi: 10.3945/ajcn.2010.29370.