

# People with Diabetes Urged to Have Their Hearing Checked Regularly; New Study Finds Higher Incidence of Hearing Loss Among Diabetics

**Washington, DC, August 18, 2008** – Patients with diabetes are more than twice as likely as those without the disease to have hearing loss, according to a recent National Institutes of Health (NIH) study. Overall, more than 40 percent of people with diabetes in the study had some degree of hearing loss.

"People with diabetes should ask their doctors to check their hearing. This should be routine," said Sergei Kochkin, Ph.D., executive director of the Better Hearing Institute (BHI). "A hearing check can be invaluable in identifying diabetic patients with potential hearing loss, and giving them an opportunity to receive the treatment they need,"

To facilitate hearing checks, the Better Hearing Institute has designed a Quick Hearing Check to help people quickly assess if they have a hearing loss requiring a comprehensive hearing test by a hearing professional. The quick check is available online at [www.hearingcheck.org](http://www.hearingcheck.org).

The study, published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, was conducted by researchers who analyzed data from hearing tests, administered from 1999 to 2004, to 5,140 participants in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). Its findings prompted investigators from the NIH to recommend that physicians encourage their patients with diabetes to have their hearing checked.

"For years, physicians who treat people with diabetes have regularly ensured that their patients receive regular vision check-ups," said Dr. William Luxford, BHI Board member and an Otolaryngologist at the House Ear Clinic in Los Angeles. "This important study underscores the need for physicians now to encourage each of their patients to get their hearing checked as well." Both vision loss and hearing loss are associated with diabetes.

Studies conducted by BHI show that people with untreated hearing loss have a lower quality of life and even earn less income than people with normal hearing or people who have treated their hearing loss by using hearing aids. Modern hearing aids that use digital technology can help most people with hearing loss. Patients are five times more likely to have their hearing professionally tested if encouraged to do so by their own physicians, according to a MarkeTrak study conducted by Kochkin.

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Founded in 1973, the Better Hearing Institute is a not-for-profit educational organization whose mission is to educate the public about hearing loss, its treatment and prevention. To receive a free copy of BHI's 28 page booklet "Your Guide to Better Hearing," visit its website at [www.betterhearing.org](http://www.betterhearing.org) or call the Better Hearing Institute hotline at 1-800-EAR-WELL.

For more information on hearing protection, visit [http://www.betterhearing.org/hearing\\_loss\\_prevention/indexDetail.c](http://www.betterhearing.org/hearing_loss_prevention/indexDetail.c)