



BrainHQ Facts



The Brain



Hearing is one of the most brain-connected senses. Signals from the inner ear don't go to just one "hearing center." They travel through multiple brain regions involved in attention, memory, emotion, and language, activating dozens of pathways and millions of neurons along the way.



Your ears collect sound but it's your brain that understands it.



Hearing Loss & Kidney Disease

What You Need to Know

People living with kidney disease are significantly more likely to experience hearing loss than the general population, even when hearing problems haven't yet been diagnosed. Research consistently shows that hearing loss is far more common in individuals with chronic kidney disease, and the risk increases as kidney function declines. This happens because the kidneys and the inner ear share similar structures and rely on precise fluid and blood flow regulation. When kidney disease disrupts these systems, the delicate sensory cells of the inner ear can also be damaged.

Many people with kidney disease also have conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease - all of which further increase the risk of hearing loss by reducing blood supply to the inner ear. In addition, medications commonly used to treat kidney-related conditions may have side effects that impact hearing. Because these changes often happen gradually, hearing loss can go unnoticed and untreated for years.



Ask One of Our Audiologists

Q: Why does background noise make everything so hard to hear?



A: Background noise makes listening difficult because hearing loss often affects the ability to separate speech from other sounds. Even when voices are loud enough, the brain may struggle to distinguish important speech signals from competing noise. This is especially true when the inner ear's sensory cells are damaged, reducing sound clarity rather than volume.

As a result, the brain has to work much harder to fill in the gaps, which can feel exhausting and frustrating. Treating hearing loss helps improve access to clearer sound, reduces listening effort, and makes it easier for the brain to focus on the voices that matter, even in noisy environments.



The issues with untreated hearing loss



Untreated hearing loss places an added burden on people already managing a chronic condition. It increases listening effort, mental fatigue, social withdrawal, and the risk of cognitive decline - factors that can significantly affect quality of life and overall health. For individuals with kidney disease, addressing hearing loss is not just about hearing better; it's about improving communication with healthcare providers, staying socially connected, and supporting brain health.

The good news is that treating hearing loss can make a meaningful difference. Early hearing assessment and appropriate treatment can reduce strain on the brain, improve daily communication, and help people better manage their overall health. For those living with kidney disease, diagnosed or not, taking care of hearing is an important and often overlooked part of whole-body wellness.

CATCH EARLY, TREAT EARLY.
Call us today to schedule your comprehensive assessment.

- AJAX** 905-426-4000
- OSHAWA** 905-723-2273
- PICKERING** 905-831-8311
- UXBRIDGE** 905-852-8888
- WHITBY** 905-666-7726

REFERENCES: Greenberg, D., Rosenblum, N.D. & Tonelli, M. (2024). The multifaceted links between hearing loss and chronic kidney disease. *Nat Rev Nephrol* 20, 295-312.

CRYPTOGRAM GAME OF THE MONTH

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