

Hearing Loss and Risk of Falling: Quick Facts

Results of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and Bloomberg School of Public Health study reveal:

- *People with a 25 dB hearing loss (mild loss) were 3 times more likely to fall than those with normal hearing in adults age 40-69.*
- *Each additional 10 dB of hearing loss increased the risk by 1.4 fold.*
- *Study results held true even when researchers accounted for other factors related to falling, such as age, sex, race, heart disease and balance.*
- *Excluding patients with moderate and severe hearing loss did not change the results.*

Hearing Loss Linked to Falling

“People who can’t hear well might not have good awareness of their overall environment, making tripping and falling more likely.”

“Gait and balance are things most people take for granted, but they are actually very cognitively demanding. If hearing loss imposes a cognitive load, there may be fewer cognitive resources to help with maintaining balance and gait.”

“Hearing loss is highly prevalent but remains vastly undertreated in older adults.”

Medical Risk Factors for Falling

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons includes hearing loss and depression as risk factors for falling. Depression is an acknowledged consequence of hearing loss.

1. Frank R. Lin, MD, PhD; Luigi Ferrucci, MD, PhD, *Arch Intern Med.* 2012;172(4):369-371.

2. AAOS: <http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00135#What%20Are%20the%20Medical%20Risk%20Factors%20for%20a%20Fall?>