

Hearing Health Matters!



Ontario Association of Professional Audiology Clinics

Your Hearing Deserves An Audiologist

What you should know about Hearing Loss and Cigarettes

Studies reveal that the dangerous chemicals in cigarette smoke can affect both the conductive mechanisms in hearing as well as the inner ear part of the hearing system. The Canadian Journal of Health reports that as many as 20% of young adults have used e-cigarettes containing nicotine.¹ Nicotine is an ototoxic chemical that restricts blood flow to the cochlea and can cause poor balance, impaired hearing or tinnitus. Hearing tests conducted by an audiologist should be part of your smoking patient's routine care. Untreated hearing loss leads to greater probability of hospitalizations, depression and dementia.

The likelihood of developing hearing loss is 70% higher for active smokers and 28% higher for second hand smokers. A 1998 cross-sectional, population based study with 3753 subjects found that "[a]fter adjusting for other factors, current smokers were 1.69 times as likely to have a hearing loss as nonsmokers (95% confidence interval, 1.31-2.17). This relationship remained for those without a history of occupational noise exposure and in analyses excluding those with non-age-related hearing loss".² Noise-induced hearing loss is exacerbated by long term smoking. Current literature shows the "combined effect on hearing with exposure to occupational noise is additive".³

The results support the practice that hearing tests "...should be repeated more often in smokers than in non-smokers in noisy work so that hearing damage can be found in an incipient stage and noise-induced hearing loss effectively prevented".⁴

"Hearing health experts have suspected that smoking contributes to hearing loss since an initial study in 1962; however, on-going studies confirm it."⁵

References

¹Czoli, Christine D.; Hammond, David; White, Christine M.. Electronic cigarettes in Canada: Prevalence of use and perceptions among youth and young adults. Can J Public Health, [S.l.], v. 105, n. 2, p. e97-e102, feb. 2014. ISSN 1920-7476. Available at: <<http://journal.cpha.ca/index.php/cjph/article/view/4119>>. Date accessed: 05 Mar. 2017. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.17269/cjph.105.4119>.

²Cruickshanks KJ, Klein R, Klein BEK, Wiley TL, Nondahl DM, Tweed TS. Cigarette Smoking and Hearing Loss. The Epidemiology of Hearing Loss Study. JAMA. 1998;279(21):1715-1719. doi:10.1001/jama.279.21.1715

³Mizoue T, Miyamoto T, Shimizu T. Combined effect of smoking and occupational exposure to noise on hearing loss in steel factory workers. Occupational and Environmental Medicine 2003;60:56-59.

⁴Hannu Virokannas and Hannu Anttonen. Dose—Response Relationship between Smoking and Impairment of Hearing Acuity in Workers Exposed to Noise Scandinavian Audiology Vol. 24, Iss. 4, 1995

⁵Clason Debbie, January 9, 2015. Available at: <http://www.healthyhearing.com/report/50940-Smoking-and-hearing-loss>

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Health risks associated with smoking are numerous. Although one can't reverse sensorineural hearing loss developed while smoking, one can prevent further hearing damage once one quits.

The Ontario Association of Professional Audiology Clinics (OAPAC) represents independent audiology practices in Ontario.

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- ✓ No quotas, no franchises, no conflict of interest
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- ✓ Offer full scope of practice to all ages
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