

A new study shows that regular fish and omega-3 intake reduces the risk of acquired hearing loss in adult women.

Greater fish and omega-3 fatty acid intake reduce the risk of hearing loss

Hearing loss after birth (acquired hearing loss) is relatively common and can be disabling. Research data on modifiable risk factors is limited, but there is some evidence that higher intake of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) and fish may be related to a decrease risk of acquired hearing loss.

In a study published online in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, researchers examined the potential independent associations between total and different types of fish, PUFAs, and hearing loss in women.

The subjects included 65,215 women who were followed from 1991 to 2009 as part of the Nurses' Health Study II. Baseline and updated information was gathered by questionnaire every two years.

After more than a million person-years of follow-up, it was determined that consumption of 2 or more servings of fish per week was linked to a lower risk of acquired hearing loss. Compared to women who ate fish once per month or less, women who ate 2-4 servings of fish per week had a 20% lower risk of hearing loss. When looking at individual fish, higher intake of each type was inversely related to risk. Women with higher intake of PUFAs also had a lower risk of hearing loss. Subjects with PUFA intake in the top 20%, had a 15% lower risk of hearing loss than women with the lowest 20% of intake. Compared to those with the lowest intake, women with intake of PUFAs in the top 10% had a reduction in hearing loss risk of 22%.

This large prospective study indicates that regular fish consumption and intakes of higher levels of omega-3 PUFAs are linked to a reduced risk of acquired hearing loss in adult women.

Sharon G Curhan et al. Fish and fatty acid consumption and the risk of hearing loss in women. First published September 10, 2014, doi: 10.3945/ajcn.114.091819