

Fish and fatty acid consumption associated with lower risk of hearing loss in women

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A school of sardines in Italy. Credit: Wikimedia / Alessandro Duci

Researchers at Brigham and Women's Hospital found that consumption of two or more servings of fish per week was associated with a lower risk of hearing loss in women. Findings of the new study Fish and Fatty Acid Consumption and Hearing Loss study led by Sharon G. Curhan, MD, BWH Channing Division of Network Medicine, are published

online on September 10 in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (AJCN).

"Acquired [hearing loss](#) is a highly prevalent and often disabling chronic health condition," stated Curhan, corresponding author. "Although a decline in hearing is often considered an inevitable aspect of aging, the identification of several potentially modifiable risk factors has provided new insight into possibilities for prevention or delay of acquired hearing loss."

Although evidence suggests higher intake of fish and long-chain omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) may be associated with lower risk of hearing loss, prospective information is limited. This prospective study examined over time the independent associations between consumption of total and specific types of fish, long-chain omega-3 PUFA, and self-reported hearing loss in women.

Data were from the Nurses' Health Study II, a [prospective cohort study](#). In the study, 65,215 women were followed from 1991 to 2009. After 1,038,093 person-years of follow-up, 11,606 cases of incident hearing loss were reported. In comparison with women who rarely consumed fish, women who consumed two or more servings of fish per week had a 20 percent lower risk of hearing loss. When examined individually, higher consumption of each specific fish type was inversely associated with risk. Higher intake of long-chain omega-3PUFA was also inversely associated with risk of hearing loss.

"Consumption of any type of fish (tuna, dark fish, light [fish](#), or shellfish) tended to be associated with lower risk. These findings suggest that diet may be important in the prevention of acquired hearing loss," stated Curhan.

Provided by Brigham and Women's Hospital

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