



Helping people  
hear better for  
over 30 years

## Heart Disease and Hearing Loss

February 2011

Heart disease is the number one cause of death in America. It is estimated that more than 80 million Americans have some form of cardiovascular disease. February is National Heart Health Month, a time when communities across the country join together to raise awareness of heart disease and promote healthy lifestyles.

Heart Health Month is particularly important to us at J Waligora Audiology, as research has shown that hearing health and heart health often go hand in hand. A recent study published in the *American Journal of Audiology* found that impaired cardiovascular health has a negative impact on the auditory system and the potential to affect an individual's ability to hear. We also know that untreated hearing loss can result in increased stress, isolation and depression – factors that contribute to an increased risk of heart disease.

Staying connected to friends and family reduces stress and promotes positive attitudes. Today's variety of advanced hearing aid solutions can be used to treat hearing loss, allowing folks to continue to take an active part in life.

Our goal is to educate and inspire people to adopt healthy heart *and* healthy hearing lifestyles. The good news: It's never too late – or too early – to make lifestyle changes! Start with these simple healthy heart guidelines:

**First Things First** – Schedule a check-up to assess your risk factors: check of your blood pressure, weight, cholesterol and blood sugar. Determine with your doctor the best healthy heart steps for you.

**Check your Hearing** – Include hearing checks as part of your routine physical exams. Studies show that a healthy cardiovascular system – heart, arteries and veins – has a positive effect on hearing. Conversely, the negative influence of impaired cardiovascular health on both the peripheral and central auditory system has the potential to affect an individual's capacity to hear.

**Stay Connected** – Staying connected to friends and family can improve your mood and reduce stress. If you find you are avoiding social situations because you are missing conversation or asking for too many repeats, talk to a hearing care professional about today's advanced hearing solutions. Left untreated, hearing loss can lead to withdrawal, depression and social isolation.

**Get Moving** – Take the stairs instead of the elevator, park a bit farther out in the parking lot, walk a little faster around the mall or go on walks over your lunch break. Even moderate activity can help you burn calories, control cholesterol levels and diabetes and even lower blood pressure.

**Clip on a Pedometer** – These inexpensive devices measure the number of steps you take. Start with slow, specific goals and aim to build up to 10,000 steps or more per day (2,000 steps is roughly equivalent to one mile).

**Eat Smart** – Eat more fiber, fruits and vegetables. Choose foods that are low in saturated fats and watch sodium intake. Choosing healthier, plant-based and natural foods can also help you control your weight – another way to reduce heart disease risk.

**Lighten Up** - Excess weight increases the heart’s work. It raises blood pressure and blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels, lowers HDL (“good”) cholesterol levels and can make you more likely to develop diabetes. By losing even as few as 10 pounds, you can lower your risk of heart disease.

**Catch Some Zzzzzs** – Sleep deprivation can make you more prone to hypertension, diabetes and other risk factors that contribute to the development of heart disease. Most people require 7 1/2 to 8 1/2 hours of sleep per night. Set a consistent bedtime and stick to it.

**A Little Help from Your Friends** – Enlist them to help you stay with your healthy diet resolutions or exercise plan. Make exercise a family affair and help the whole family take steps in a healthy direction. (Having the support of family and friends is also very important for new hearing aid users.)

**Laugh Out Loud** – It’s no secret that laughter lowers stress and helps build positive attitudes. Harvard researchers found that men with the most positive attitudes were half as likely to experience heart problems as those who were more negative.

**Check out the following websites for more heart healthy support and advice:**

- American Heart Association - [www.Americanheart.org](http://www.Americanheart.org)
- National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute - [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)
- American Dietetic Association - [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

Excerpts from:

<http://www.oticonusa.com/Oticon/News.html>

[http://www.oticonusa.com/Oticon/People\\_First/Post\\_Your\\_Progress.html](http://www.oticonusa.com/Oticon/People_First/Post_Your_Progress.html)