Can Healthy Eating Reduce Hearing Loss Risk for Women?

Diets that include fruits and vegetables have been shown to lower the chance that women will suffer moderate to severe hearing impairment.

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Nearly 48 million Americans are affected by hearing loss. But a healthy diet may reduce the risk of hearing impairment among women, suggest new findings published in the Journal of Nutrition, reports HealthDay.

For the study, scientists reviewed data from about 71,000 women who were tracked for 22 years in the Nurses' Health Study II. Researchers noted that those individuals who followed eating regimens similar to the Alternate Mediterranean Diet (AMED) or the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet were 30 percent less likely to suffer moderate or severe hearing loss.

The AMED diet includes extra virgin olive oil, grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts, fish and moderate amounts of alcohol. The DASH diet features fruits, veggies and low-fat dairy and restricts salt consumption. (In addition, scientists found that another comparable diet, the Alternative Health Eating Index-2010, might also play a role in protecting against hearing loss.)

"We observed that those following an overall healthy diet had a lower risk of moderate or worse hearing loss," said the study's first author Sharon Curhan, MD, of Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

While researchers couldn't identify a direct cause-and-effect relationship, investigators concluded that a healthy diet supports overall good health and possibly decreases women's risk of going deaf.

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