

# Is there really a bigger risk of dementia if you have untreated hearing loss?

## Major modifiable risk factors for developing dementia\*

In order of relative risk, high to low:

- **Hearing loss** ←
- Depression
- Social isolation
- Obesity
- Hypertension
- Smoking
- Lower education
- Diabetes
- Physical inactivity

## How does hearing loss contribute to the risk of developing dementia?



Hearing loss increases the load on your brain by redirecting resources to processing what is heard (or not heard) rather than thinking processes like memory.\*

Reduced clear sound getting to the brain causes the brain to stop using those areas usually engaged in interpreting sound. This may lead to those areas shrinking or degenerating, effectively altering the structure of the brain.\*

## How much risk\* is too much?

Level of hearing loss	Risk increases
Mild	<b>2</b> times the risk
Moderate	<b>3</b> times the risk
Severe	<b>5</b> times the risk

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1-888-457-3453



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\* For more information and research references, visit [HearWellBeWell.ca/risk-of-dementia/](http://HearWellBeWell.ca/risk-of-dementia/)