

Are earbuds hurting your hearing?



**YOUR
HEALTH**

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Sound of music

Q I listen to music for hours using earbuds. I get ringing sounds in the left ear. I also hear outside sounds muffled. I am 23 years old.

While inserting the earbuds you may have inadvertently pushed the ear wax deep into the ear causing an impaction. An ENT surgeon will be able to figure this out and remove any impacted wax. Also, your hearing may need to be evaluated. Constant use of earbuds at high volume can damage the inner ear and eventually lead to hearing loss.

Sneaky stroke

Q My grandmother suddenly developed weakness on one side of her body. She can walk but is very agitated and imagines things.

She may have had a stroke. Although it usually causes sudden weakness on one side, women may experience agitation or hallucinations too. Evaluate for risk factors like diabetes, hypertension and elevated lipids. Do consult a physician.

Self-testing

Q I am diabetic and need blood sugar tests. The phlebotomist has difficulty in finding my veins.

It may be easier if you buy a glucometer and do the tests yourself. This involves a finger prick only. Write down the fasting and post prandial values, and show them to your physician. Also, follow your diabetic diet with appropriate calorie restriction and walk for 30 minutes a day.

Rising cholesterol

Q My cholesterol level is high even though I am a vegetarian who eats eggs.

A high level of cholesterol can occur even in vegetarians because of

increasing age, a family history of elevated lipids or cholesterol, obesity and an inactive lifestyle without exercise. Also, more than meat, trans and saturated fats that may be used for cooking can elevate lipids. Try to use only 500ml of unsaturated oil per month per person. Cholesterol-rich foods like eggs have only a small effect on total blood cholesterol levels.

Milk trouble

Q I have stomach cramps whenever I drink milk, or even have milk tea or coffee. I used to drink milk when I was younger.

Indians can develop relative milk intolerance as they age. They are unable to fully digest the sugar (lactose) in milk. This leads to pain, diarrhoea, gas and bloating. It is a harmless but an uncomfortable condition. You may be able to tolerate partially digested milk like curd.

Weight loss

Q I took a herbal natural weight loss powder. I lost a lot of weight but developed palpitations and sweating. Once I stopped the powder, I regained the lost weight.

The problem with herbal medication is that the ingredients are not listed or controlled. The powder may have contained the natural precursor form of the hormone ephedrine that stimulates the thyroid. Both of these can produce the side effects you described. Consult a physician and work on diet and exercise for weight loss. There are surgeries for weight loss and some allopathic medications like Semaglutide. All these have side effects. Consult a doctor and figure out what is best for you.

Constipation in children

Q My 3-year-old is constipated. The paediatrician did not give laxatives but ran a lot of tests and said she is normal. Please advise.

Try reducing her milk consumption to 400ml a day. Increase her water intake to 1.5l daily. Ensure she eats two fruits a day. Make her run around the house or on the terrace for 30 minutes a day. Physical activity helps bowel movement.



The writer has a family practice at Vellore and is the author of *Staying Healthy in Modern India*. If you have any question on health issues please write to yourhealthgm@yahoo.co.in