



## Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is common with aging, affecting  $\frac{1}{3}$  of those over the age of 65, and over  $\frac{1}{2}$  of those over 75. Onset at younger ages is often related to noise exposure, while the incidence of age-related hearing loss (presbycusis) increases as time goes on.

Hearing involves sound waves entering the ear and vibrating 3 tiny bones in the middle ear, which leads to stimulation of sensory cells called hair cells, which cause a chemical electrical signal to the nerves in the inner ear. The auditory nerve then takes the signal to the brain to interpret it as a sound we understand. Both the sensory cell function and the processing of the signals decrease with age, leading to hearing loss and difficulty both discriminating speech and comprehending it.

Hearing loss affects cognitive health. Studies have shown that older adults with hearing loss have a greater risk of developing dementia as well as more rapid decline in cognition. A study published in 2023 compared cognitive decline between people who did and didn't get hearing aids. There were 2 groups of patients in the study- one from a study of heart health (these participants were older, with more risk factors for dementia) and another from the general community population. The heart study patients who got hearing aids (who were at higher cardiac risk) had a significant reduction in the rate of cognitive decline over the 3 year study, though the general community group with hearing aids did not. Patients in both groups who got hearing aids (not surprisingly!) had improved hearing and communication.

Frustration with hearing loss can lead to depression and withdrawing from others, which worsens social isolation. Missing out on conversations with loved ones and not being able to hear your grandchildren's high pitched voices most definitely will reduce your quality of life!

Signs of hearing loss:

- trouble hearing on the phone
- hard to follow conversations with more than 2 people talking
- needing to turn up the TV volume louder
- trouble understanding speech due to background noise
- thinking others are mumbling when talking
- more difficulty hearing children and people with higher pitched voices.

If you are noticing these, talk to your doctor and consider seeing an audiologist for further testing.

Hearing aids are now available over-the-counter without a prescription, at a lower cost and can help people with mild to moderate hearing loss.

In addition, there was a recent FDA approval for using Apple's AirPods as hearing aids with a new "hearing aid feature" for mild to moderate hearing loss. This is part of an upcoming software update for AirPods Pro 2 ear buds. Users can check their hearing at home with a 5 minute test and adjust the settings based on their hearing.

Audiologists can prescribe hearing aids for patients with severe or complex hearing loss, as well as help fit and adjust the device. Therefore, working with an audiologist is a great option if you have used over-the-counter hearing aids without good results.

A quick note on prevention - If your hearing is still intact, work to preserve it! Noise-induced hearing loss can come from even a single, one time exposure to a very loud sound, but more often comes from longer periods of exposure to loud sounds leading to damage of nerve cells (hair cells) in your inner ear. Use hearing protection (earplugs) in loud environments like concerts and consider using noise-canceling headphones to avoid having to turn up the volume to hear when using headphones and ear buds. In addition, over-the-ear headphones may be less damaging than in-ear ones.

Overall, preventing and treating hearing loss can help improve quality of life as well as potentially delay or prevent dementia and cognitive decline, so if you have concerns, talk to your PHP doctor!



Preferred Health Partners

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## Administrative Updates

Please welcome our newest physician - **Dr. Henry Townsend** at our Plano office. Dr. Townsend is specialized in Rheumatology and is accepting new patients. Patients may find a list of all Preferred Health Partner physicians accepting new patients by visiting [ntphp.com/accepting-new-patients](http://ntphp.com/accepting-new-patients)

Our Park Cities office is excited to announce that they have moved to their new office. They are now located at 8222 Douglas Ave Suite 600, Dallas TX 75225. Contact information including phone number has remained the same.

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## Healthy Habits:

### Vegetarian Quinoa Stuffed Acorn Squash

Adapted from: Fully Mediterranean

### Ingredients

#### Roasted Squash:

- 2 acorn squash
- olive oil
- salt

#### For the Quinoa Stuffing:

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- ½ cup cranberries
- ½ cup celery
- ¼ cup red onion
- ½ cup pecans chopped and toasted

- 1 cup quinoa cooked according to package directions using low-sodium vegetable broth
- vegetable broth low sodium
- ½ cup feta cheese
- Honey Balsamic Vinaigrette Dressing (Combine ½ cup Olive oil, 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard, 4 Tablespoons Balsamic vinegar, 1-2 Tablespoons honey)

Optional: Fresh parsley Chopped

### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Roast the squash
  - Cut the acorn squash across the middle and remove the seeds using a spoon.
  - Drizzle the inside of the squash with olive oil and season with salt. Place squash open side up on the prepared baking sheet.
  - Bake for 30-40 minutes depending on the size of the squash. It is done when the squash is tender and golden brown. Set aside.
3. Prepare the quinoa according to package directions using low-sodium vegetable broth and set aside.
4. Make the stuffing
  - In a medium saucepan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil.
  - Add cranberries, celery, red onion, and pecans, and sauté until tender.
  - Add the quinoa and combine. Continue to sauté until heated through.
5. Place the quinoa stuffing in a large bowl. Add the feta and slowly add the balsamic honey dressing until the preferred consistency.
6. Spoon the quinoa stuffing into the warm or room temperature roasted squash.
7. Top with more feta and chopped parsley if desired and Enjoy!

## Locations

### Austin

1305 W. 34th St. Suite 204  
Austin, Texas 78705  
737-285-3770

### Dallas - Gaston

3417 Gaston Ave. Suite 700  
Dallas, TX 75246  
214-823-4800

### Dallas - Junius

3900 Junius St. Suite 415  
Dallas, TX 75246  
972-993-8300

### Frisco

3535 Victory Group Way Suite 330  
Frisco, TX 75034  
972-993-5070

### Las Colinas

440 W. I-635 Suite 405  
Irving, TX 75063  
972-993-5080

### Park Cities

8222 Douglas Ave Suite 600  
Dallas, TX 75225  
972-993-5040

### Plano

4708 Dexter Dr. Suite 400  
Plano, TX 75093  
972-993-5050

### Walnut Hill

8144 Walnut Hill Suite 360  
Dallas, TX 75231  
972-993-8350