

TINNITUS

Tinnitus can be a single sound or a number of different sounds. It can develop gradually or suddenly.

What is Tinnitus?

Tinnitus is a sensation of sound in one ear, both ears or the head which is not present in the external environment. It can be heard as a ringing, buzzing, hissing, whistling, throbbing, booming, clicking, roaring or cicada-like noise.

Tinnitus is invisible, and the noises do not cause pain. It is often difficult to appreciate the devastating nature of severe tinnitus.

How common is Tinnitus?

Most people experience tinnitus at some time, especially in very quiet surroundings. 17% to 30% of the population experience persistent tinnitus. Tinnitus is severe for 2% of the population and severely disturbs the way of life of 0.5% to 1% of the population. In Australia, we would expect to find approximately 360,000 people who regard their tinnitus as severe; and approximately 90,000 who find their tinnitus severely disrupts their way of life.

What Causes Tinnitus?

Tinnitus is not a disease and it is not a sign of mental illness. It is usually a symptom of some problem within the auditory system.

These may include:

- Hearing loss. Tinnitus does not cause a hearing loss, although it is often present with a hearing loss. There are, however, many people with normal hearing who also have tinnitus.
- Exposure to **Excessive Noise** (the most common cause of tinnitus) **Noise destroys**
- Middle and inner ear conditions (eg. Meniere's disease, otosclerosis, ear infections)
- Changes to the ear as a result of ear surgery
- Injury to the ear or head
- Viral infections
- Some medications
- Reduced blood flow to the ear
- Acoustic neuroma (a rare, benign tumour of the acoustic nerve)

Aggravating Factors

- Loud noise
- Some medications (Check with your doctor that any medication being used does not list tinnitus as a side-effect but please do not make any changes without medical consultation)
- Stress and fatigue will often increase the loudness of tinnitus as well as making it much more difficult to manage
- Caffeine, which is found in coffee, strong tea, cola drinks or chocolate
- Alcohol, particularly champagne and red wine (Sensitivity will vary)
- Smoking, both of tobacco and particularly marijuana

More information? Contact info@hearinglink.com.au

Useful links: www.shhhaust.org
www.tinnitus.asn.au