



TINNITUS

What is Tinnitus?

Tinnitus is the perception of sound without an external source. It is a symptom, not a disease. This sound can be perceived on either side, or one side of the head and can appear to come from within or outside the head. It is most often described as a ringing, buzzing, humming, roaring, or clicking sound. Tinnitus can be constant or intermittent. Transient perceived noise lasting just minutes is normal, and not tinnitus. More than 50 million people in the United States have reported experiencing tinnitus, leading to a prevalence of 10% to 15%. Around 1/5th of adults who have tinnitus will require clinical intervention. Tinnitus is relatively common, and the effects vary widely from patient to patient. If the symptoms last for greater than 6 months, it is persistent tinnitus. Bothersome tinnitus is defined as the problem significantly affecting your quality of life, preventing sleep, and disrupting your ability to perform general activities of daily living.

What Causes Tinnitus?

There is no identifiable cause for the majority of patients with tinnitus, although it is most commonly associated with hearing loss (primary tinnitus). In rare cases, tinnitus has an organic cause such as Eustachian tube dysfunction, otosclerosis, Meniere's disease, auditory nerve abnormalities, vestibular schwannoma, or vascular anomalies (secondary tinnitus). Many drugs can cause tinnitus including Aminoglycosides (antibiotic), cisplatin (chemotherapy), or high doses of Aspirin. Tinnitus is often accompanied by symptoms of depression and anxiety. Loud noise exposure can cause tinnitus for a few hours to days, and this often resolves.

How is Tinnitus Treated?

Unfortunately, there is no cure for tinnitus. Despite there being no magic pill for this symptom, there are many therapeutic options that have been shown to help a significant amount of patients. If one therapy does not work for you, then move on to the next option and hopefully it will work for you.

For the patient in which tinnitus is bothersome, there are many options:

- Hearing aids: This has been proven to improve quality of life and limit the effects of tinnitus.
- Sound Therapy: machines that produce background sound (rain, wind...) or white noise (broadband). These are available at electronic stores, as apps on your Smartphone, or in your hearing aids.
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): mental health professionals provide this therapy which usually involve 8-24 sessions that last 60-120 minutes each. This therapy has improved quality of life scores.

For the patient in which tinnitus is NOT bothersome, there are many lifestyle changes and supplements that may be tried.

- Ginkgo biloba: This drug contains flavonoids and terpenoids, which act as antioxidants, free-radical scavengers, and have antiplatelet properties increase blood flow and decrease free radicals in the inner ear.
- Lipoflavonoids: The exact mechanism is unknown, but it is thought to increase the circulation of the inner ear.
- Zinc: this has been shown to improve the auditory nerve signal.
- Melatonin: This has been shown to help patients with tinnitus and insomnia.

Acupuncture, transcranial magnetic stimulation, anti-depressants, anticonvulsants, and anxiolytics have been proven to NOT have any benefit in patients with bothersome tinnitus.

Jeffrey S. Weingarten, M.D. C. Bart Dickson, M.D. Michael E. Stone, M.D. Robert T. Standing, M.D.

Southfield

Novi

St. Clair Shores

Livonia

248-569-5985

ENTforYou.com