

in the tinnitus. Research is ongoing to determine whether a type of implanted stimulus can be devised that will be safe and effective for people with normal hearing tinnitus.

9. Other. Additionally, some patients have found help through hypnosis or acupuncture.

People who are suffering from tinnitus and who have not been helped by conventional methods are sometimes driven to seek any form of treatment that holds out hope. Some tinnitus sufferers seeking help through non-medical interventions have tried one or more unproven remedies, even when well intentioned, usually is a waste of time. Remember, unproven remedies may appear to work, simply because they are tried at the beginning of a natural remission.

Is There an Operation for Tinnitus?

Patients sometimes report that following successful surgical treatment for ear pathologies their tinnitus will also disappear. However, this is not always the case. Many patients inquire about the possibility of severing the hearing nerve to eliminate tinnitus but this procedure has not proven successful. Destruction of the hearing mechanism will often leave tinnitus still present or worse.

Websites of Interest

- www.MedlinePlus.com
- www.MayoClinic.com/health/tinnitus/DS00365
- www.ATA.org

About Our Group:

Ear Nose and Throat Consultants of Nevada (ENTC) represents a state of the art practice dedicated to the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the head and neck and related structures (the medical specialty of otolaryngology).

ENTC is the largest ear, nose and throat specialty practice in the entire southwest desert. ENTC provides a comprehensive and unique capability to evaluate and treat disorders in this field of health care.

The mission of ENTC, since its inception, has been to provide excellent care for patients and to accomplish this within a friendly, caring atmosphere. The physicians of ENTC comprise a group of dedicated and highly trained specialists with a tradition of service excellence in Nevada for the last five decades. Additionally, difficult cases are frequently discussed at regular group meetings so that these patients receive the benefit of opinions from 8 or 9 physicians.

Finally, ENTC is a dynamic organization keeping pace with technological and informational progress in otolaryngology for the benefit of its patients and referring physicians.

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TINNITUS

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What is it?

Tinnitus is a subjective experience where one hears a sound where no external physical sound is present. Some call it "head noises", "ear ringing", or use similar terms to describe it. Tinnitus can be a hiss, ring, roar, buzz or cricket sound.

What Does the Word Tinnitus Mean?

The word is of Latin origin and it means to "tinkle or to ring like a bell." It has two pronunciations, both correct: "tin-NYE-tus" or "TINN-in-tus".

What Causes It?

There are many causes; indeed almost everything that can go wrong with the ear has tinnitus associated with it as a symptom. Problems ranging in severity from wax impinging on the eardrum to acoustic tumors can produce tinnitus. Most ear pathologies have tinnitus associated with them. One of the most common causes of tinnitus is exposure to excessively loud sounds either on the job (musicians, carpenters, pilots) or recreationally (shooting, chainsaws, loud music, etc.). Sometimes problems not associated with the ear can cause tinnitus. Examples of non-auditory causes are disorders of the cervical vertebrae (neck) and temporomandibular joint disorders, (jawbone).

Do Many People Suffer from Tinnitus?

Yes. It is currently estimated that 50 million American adults have tinnitus to some degree.

Of that number, 12 million have it severely enough to seek medical help. During an average year patients with severe tinnitus may spend more money seeking help and treatment than they do for all their other health conditions.

Is It Associated With Hearing Loss?

Sometimes, tinnitus is associated with some hearing loss. For example, those who have been exposed to excessively loud sounds may have a hearing loss for the high-pitched tones. Usually their tinnitus will be identified as a high-pitched tone in the frequencies of the hearing loss. Tinnitus can be perceived as being in the ears or in or around the head and can have one or a variety of different sounds such as ringing, hissing or roaring. In some cases tinnitus is present where there is no hearing loss and for which there is no discernible reason. Tinnitus is an indication that there has been some kind of damage to the hearing mechanism, but it does not mean the patient will become deaf.

What Make Tinnitus Worse?

The most common reasons for aggravating ones tinnitus are:

1. Stress. It is important to reduce stress as much as possible in order to better cope with tinnitus.
2. Loud Sounds. Tinnitus patients should avoid loud sounds at all cost. Tinnitus patients are encouraged to go overboard in protecting their ears from loud sound. Chainsaws, guns, motorcycles, noisy vacuum cleaners, etc., should be used only with ear protection either earplugs or earmuffs or both.
3. Excessive use of alcohol or so called recreation drugs. Many tinnitus patients find

that following the use of alcohol their tinnitus will be increased.

4. Caffeine. Tinnitus patients are asked to give up all forms of caffeine for a one-month period to determine whether or not caffeine had an adverse effect on their tinnitus. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, soft drinks and chocolate.
5. Drug Therapy. Many drugs have been investigated as possible relief agents for tinnitus. These drugs have included "anticonvulsant drugs", tranquilizers, anti-anxiety drugs, and antihistamines. For some patients, these drugs are partially effective in helping them to cope with the tinnitus. It is also well established that Lidocaine will offer complete or partial relief for a large number of patients. However, because this drug must be administered intravenously and its effect is not long lasting, it is not the drug of choice for treatment of this symptom. Research continues in an attempt to identify a drug that can be administered orally and have a comparable effect to lidocaine without serious side effects. It is hoped that a more permanent treatment will be forthcoming in this area.
6. Dental Treatment. Dental treatment for temporomandibular joint (TMJ) problems associated with tinnitus has been effective for some who suffer from this dual problem. Symptoms or damage to this joint, which is located just in front of the ear, include tinnitus and ear pain.
7. Counseling. Behavioral modeling, cognitive therapy, patient education and support groups have been shown to be useful for many patients who are having trouble coping with tinnitus.
8. Cochlear Implants. Currently these implants are meant for people with no usable hearing. Some of these patients report improvement