

## TINNITUS

### What is Tinnitus?

Tinnitus is often described as “ringing” or “buzzing” in the ears, but it can be any sound or combination of sounds. Tinnitus results from nerve activity that the brain interprets as “sound.” Everyone experiences tinnitus sometimes. Some people experience constant, or near-constant tinnitus.

### How do you pronounce “Tinnitus”?

“ti-night-us” or “tin-uh-tus” – either is correct.

### How common is tinnitus?

The American Tinnitus Association estimates that 50 million individuals in the United States have tinnitus. It is likely that 3-4 million veterans experience tinnitus.

### What causes tinnitus?

The most common cause of tinnitus is exposure to loud noise. Tinnitus can also result from head injury, medications, ear wax, and many other causes. It can be impossible to know the exact cause of tinnitus because it is associated with so many conditions, such as high blood pressure, stress, dental problems, metabolic problems, and high cholesterol.

### What is the connection between hearing loss and tinnitus?

Damage to the ears often results in both hearing loss and tinnitus. However, they do not always occur together. Tinnitus does not cause hearing loss but sometimes tinnitus can seem to interfere with hearing. An audiologist can determine if you have a hearing problem.

### Is there a cure for tinnitus?

A “cure” would be some way to make the tinnitus sound stop. There are treatments for tinnitus but research has not yet found a cure.

### Do I need treatment for my tinnitus?

Treatment can make tinnitus less of a problem. Not everyone with tinnitus needs treatment. Treatment may be helpful for you if your tinnitus is affecting your sleep, ability to concentrate, emotional well-being, or daily activities.

You may need a medical evaluation if your tinnitus is on one side of the head, or if you have changes in your hearing, ear pain, head or neck problems, or balance issues.

### What form of treatment is most effective?

There are several methods for tinnitus treatment. Please see your audiologist to discuss these choices. Even changes in lifestyle can be helpful. Some resources are listed at the end of this information sheet.

### What treatments do healthcare professionals provide?

#### Physician

A doctor can often help if your tinnitus is causing sleep problems, anxiety, or depression. An ear, nose, and throat (ENT) doctor can check for any medical problems that may be causing your tinnitus. Check with your doctor to find out if tinnitus is a side effect of your medication. Have your doctor check your ears for ear wax.