

Handy Handouts®

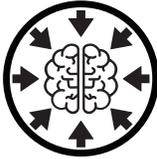
Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Can You Hear That?

by Lindsey Wegner, M.A., CCC-SLP



Can you hear a hissing, roaring, pulsing, whooshing, chirping, whistling, or clicking sound when no other sound is present? You might have tinnitus or “ringing in the ears.” Most adults have experienced tinnitus at some time in their lives. However, about 15% of adults have experienced tinnitus so severely they have sought medical attention. The exact cause of tinnitus is still unknown. It is not considered a disease but rather a symptom of an illness, just as a fever or headache is a symptom of the flu.

-  • Loud noise - short-term exposure such as attending a loud football game or long-term exposure to loud sounds such as constantly working around heavy machinery can cause permanent damage.
-  • Migraine headaches
-  • Head or neck injury – trauma to head or neck in any way can affect hearing nerves, which might lead to tinnitus.
-  • Wax buildup in the ear - when too much earwax builds up in the inner ear, it can become difficult to wash out, causing hearing loss.
-  • Drugs or medicine – such as Antibiotics, cancer medications, water pills (diuretics), Quinine, certain antidepressants, and Aspirin taken in high doses may worsen tinnitus.
-  • Anemia - a condition in which you do not have enough healthy red blood cells to carry adequate oxygen to the body's tissues.
-  • Hypertension – is a condition in which you have abnormally high blood pressure.
- • Smoking Cigarettes – smokers have a higher risk of developing tinnitus.

What are some common causes of tinnitus?



- Hearing loss – also known as presbycusis, is very common with aging.
- Ménière's disease – an inner ear disorder caused by abnormal inner ear fluid pressure.



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(cont.)

How can I prevent tinnitus?



- Use hearing protection. Wearing earplugs at loud events over time can help with overall hearing and decrease hearing loss associated with aging.



- Turn the volume down. When listening to music, do not turn the volume up all the way. Keep the sound down to a comfortable volume.



- Take care of your cardiovascular health. It is important to exercise regularly and eat right.



Remember, tinnitus is not a specific illness; it is a symptom to be a bigger problem. If you are experiencing severe side effects from tinnitus, you should receive a medical examination and inform the doctor of your tinnitus symptoms. In addition, you should have a full hearing evaluation conducted by an audiologist.

Resources:

"Tinnitus" (2017) Retrieved 1/25/18 from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/tinnitus/symptoms-causes/syc-20350156>

"Tinnitus" Retrieved 1/25/18 from <http://www.asha.org/public/hearing/Tinnitus/>

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