



# I hear ringing in my ear - FAQ

Ringing in the ears is called tinnitus. This sensation is not caused by an external sound and hence cannot be heard by others. You may have the sensation of hearing buzzing, hissing, chirping, whistling, ringing, or other sounds that could be intermittent or continuous.

The loudness of tinnitus may vary. It is often worse when the background noise is low; hence, you may hear this more at night when you are making an effort to fall asleep.

It affects about 15% to 20% of people and is especially common in older adults. It's a signal to listen to your body.

## **Why do I have tinnitus?**

The major cause of tinnitus is damaged hair cells in the inner ear. It could be due

1. Old age- As age advances, the hair cell are more prone to oxidative damages
2. Exposure to loud sound for a longer time- May be occupation related, can lead to hair cell damage
3. Ménière's disease- Inner ear disease associated with balance disorders
4. Ear infections / accumulated wax
5. Brain tumors
6. Hormonal changes in women
7. Thyroid abnormalities
8. Medications- NSAID , diuretics, antidepressants etc
9. Acid reflux
10. Jaw disorders - Like TMJ arthritis/tenderness

## **Important note**

Tinnitus may also be associated with hearing loss.

Patients who were infected with Covid 19 also present with sudden hearing loss and tinnitus



## **Treatment for tinnitus**

The doctor may conduct a detailed physical examination of the ENT region, especially the ear and nose endoscopically. Inform the doctor about the medications that you take. A detailed audiogram (hearing test) will also be taken for assessing the hearing status of the patient. To rule out structural damage to the inner ear The doctor may suggest you MRI of the brain and inner ear.

Treatment depends on the cause of tinnitus. Any correctable causes/ underlying medical conditions will be evaluated and managed first.

**Depending on the severity and time of onset, your ENT doctor may recommend:**

- Medications
- Injections into the ear
- Hearing aids.
- Counseling.
- Wearable sound generators
- Acoustic neural simulation.
- Tabletop sound generators
- Cochlear implants.

Hearing aids and sound generators create a band of noise that helps to cancel out the ringing sensation in the ear. Hearing soft music at night may help with sleeping.

## **Tinnitus Retraining therapy**

To get rid of tinnitus, we must train our brain to become accustomed to this signal. This requires time and effort from the patient to get used to it and ignore the tinnitus sound.

Cognitive therapy and Relaxation techniques will also help you with the same

### **How to prevent Tinnitus?**

1. Avoid exposure to loud sounds.
2. Wear Earplugs at the workplace in case of loud noise
3. Reduce the volume if you're listening to music; avoid loud music.
4. Avoid self medications
5. Avoid too much alcohol, caffeine, smoking ( Nicotine)

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