
HOW CAN I LESSEN THE IMPACT OF TINNITUS?

Some tips for reducing the impact of your tinnitus include:

- Avoid exposure to loud sounds and noises
- Get your blood pressure checked; if it's high, get your doctor's help to control it
- Exercise daily to improve your circulation
- Get adequate rest and avoid fatigue
- Use background music/noise or a sound machine to help dampen or eliminate the tinnitus
- Use mental techniques to push the perception of tinnitus to the background; the more you think about the tinnitus, the louder it will seem
- Take steps to reduce stress
- Reduce or eliminate your caffeine consumption

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT TINNITUS

Can other people hear the noise in my ears?

Not usually. Most of the time, the tinnitus is "subjective," meaning that it is only heard by you. In rare cases of "objective tinnitus," others may be able to use a special in-the-ear microphone to hear what you hear.

Why is my tinnitus so loud at night?

Tinnitus is a sound that is "masked" by external sounds such as office or traffic noise, TV or radio, etc. It is also not perceived when the brain is busy elsewhere, such as at work. At night, when external sounds are at a minimum and the brain is not focused on something else, tinnitus often sounds much louder and becomes more bothersome. In general, use of a sound generator at night is very helpful in decreasing the disturbance of tinnitus. If tinnitus is interfering with your sleep, you should inform your doctor.

Can my child be at risk for tinnitus?

It is relatively rare, but not unheard of, for patients under 18-years-old to have tinnitus as a primary complaint. However, it is possible that tinnitus in children is significantly under-reported, in part because young children may not be able to express this complaint. Also, in children with congenital sensorineural hearing loss that may be accompanied by tinnitus, this symptom may be unnoticed because it is something that is constant in their lives. In fact, they may habituate to it; the brain may learn to ignore this internal sound.

In pre-teens and teens, the highest risk for developing tinnitus is associated with exposure to high intensity sounds, specifically listening to music. It can be difficult for parents to monitor the level of sound exposure to teens using personal music devices or hand-held electronic games with ear buds. Therefore, the best and most effective mode of prevention of tinnitus in children is proper education on the risks of excessive sound exposure in combination with proper monitoring by parents or other caregivers. Limits on the maximum volume output can be programmed into many electronic devices.