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Otolaryngology
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TINNITUS

What is Tinnitus?

Tinnitus can simply mean a “noise heard in the ear”. Tinnitus can also describe a disorder of hearing whose main symptom is the sufferer experiences sounds for which there are no matching source in the environment.

The Sounds of Tinnitus

1. Ringing Sounds-Ranging from those resembling a telephone’s shrill ring or lower bell-like noises
2. Ill-defined sounds like a stream or babbling brook
3. Hissing noise-like stream from a boiling kettle
4. Buzzing-like a swarm of flying insects
5. Humming noises of all kinds
6. Clicking sounds of all kinds-like tapping of keys, a typewriter or a hot car engine as it cools off. The clicking may follow a pattern or be irregular.
7. Whistling noises, throbbing noises or chirping noises like birds

Causes of Tinnitus

1. Circulation-Blood flowing through the bigger vessels in the head or small arteries that supply the ear
2. Skeleton-one of the most common sources of sound. Sounds made by the jaw, neck, back or shoulders can cause tinnitus
3. Previous exposure to loud noises-explosions, gunfire, repeated and prolonged exposure to noise
4. Stress, Anxiety and Depression
5. Aging-hearing normally decreases with the passing of years
6. Ear Wax (Cerumin)
7. Medical Problems-High Blood Pressure, Thyroid Gland Problems, Diabetes, Multiple Sclerosis or Meningitis
8. Head Injuries or Trauma

Smoking can cause Tinnitus.

Medicines that can cause Tinnitus:

1. Aspirin
2. Ibuprofen
3. Indomethacin
4. Antibiotics
5. Antidepressants
6. Diuretics

Foods that can cause Tinnitus:

1. Caffeine-Coffee, tea, colas that contain caffeine
2. Cocoa-chocolate, pastries, cakes, packaged foods
3. Foods high in saturated fats
4. Alcohol
5. High salt intake
6. High sugar intake
7. Food Allergies-most commonly wheat, soy products, milk, eggs and peanuts

Reducing the Impact of Tinnitus:

Unfortunately, medical help will provide relief for a relatively small number of sufferers from tinnitus. There are other ways to help.

1. Identification-and thereafter the avoidance-of things that set off or make tinnitus worse.
2. Electronic devices, such as hearing aids or tinnitus maskers, may help improve hearing or minimize tinnitus by introducing new sounds to "cancel out" the sounds of tinnitus.
3. Seeking a way to change how a sufferer reacts to the tinnitus to make it more acceptable and less disabling. These methods usually rely heavily on methods to reduce stress and anxiety.
4. Avoid foods that tend to cause tinnitus, especially foods with caffeine, chocolate, fats or salt.
5. Avoid alcohol and tobacco products.
6. Some foods may help: Vitamin A, Vitamin D, Iron and Zinc.
7. Avoid drugs known to cause tinnitus. However, check with your primary care doctor before changing or altering any prescription medications. Self-medication and changing medicines can be harmful to your health.
8. Avoid loud noise. Wear hearing protection while hunting, at sporting events, concerts, etc.
9. Radios, soft music and so on. Many tinnitus sufferers have found that having a radio, tape or CD playing at low volume can be an effective tinnitus masker. Several devices are available that provide constant background noise known as "white noise", often infant sound machines have this option.

Get More Information

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