

Tinnitus: What's That Ringing Noise?

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Aug 09, 2022

Have you ever left a concert or sporting event with a high-pitched ringing in your ears? This is called tinnitus. Virtually everyone will experience some tinnitus from time to time throughout their life. Although it is usually the result of being around loud noises, that's not always the case, and not everyone experiences tinnitus the same way. For example, tinnitus has been described as ringing, roaring, clicking, hissing, or buzzing in the ears that only you can hear.

What Causes Tinnitus?

Exposure to loud sounds, or long-term exposure to moderately loud sounds, can lead to Tinnitus. The loud sounds damage the inner ear's ability to send clear signals to the brain which causes mix-ups that your brain interprets as a ringing sound.

Tinnitus can also be caused by certain medications, like aspirin, [NSAIDS](#), [loop diuretics](#), and some chemotherapy and cardiac medications. However, the tinnitus usually stops when the use of the medication is over. Lastly, sometimes the cause is simply unknown. Although most people will experience temporary tinnitus, there are some people who may develop permanent tinnitus.

How to Treat Tinnitus

Although there is no permanent cure for tinnitus, there are several treatments that can lessen its effects. In mild cases, using a sound generator can help mask tinnitus — especially when you're trying to sleep or in very quiet situations where tinnitus can become more noticeable. If the tinnitus is more severe, hearing aids can also help.

Many hearing aid models today are built specifically to combat the effects of tinnitus by helping you hear better and by counteracting the tinnitus with sounds and tones meant to mask it. (For example, [watch this video](#) about a tinnitus sufferer who found relief with hearing aids.) In some extreme cases, counseling can even reduce the psychological effects of tinnitus and provide strategies for dealing with it.

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If you are experiencing tinnitus, the VFW encourages you to talk to a hearing healthcare provider today. As part of the VFW's hearing care program, you can lower your out-of-pocket cost on hearing aids through TruHearing®. Call TruHearing at 1.888.888.8888 to get started.