



About Tinnitus

Symptoms of Tinnitus

Can you hear sounds such as ringing, buzzing, hissing, or humming that are localised to your ears or head? Is this present even when there are no noises around you such as traffic, television or people talking?

If so, you are probably suffering from tinnitus.

An estimated six million people in the UK have experienced tinnitus at one time or another and while many find this only mildly annoying, hundreds of thousands of people are made miserable by the constant intrusion of the noise.

Tinnitus can start for many reasons, and sometimes it can disappear in the first few months, just as suddenly as it arrived.

Our [self help guide](#) on our website can provide useful information for you if you are experiencing tinnitus for the first time.

Common symptoms of tinnitus:

- Hearing noises which have no external source
- Difficulty going to sleep
- Poor restorative sleep
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor or muffled hearing
- Feeling anxious
- Loud noise which is uncomfortable

What is tinnitus?

Tinnitus is a conscious awareness of a sound in the ears or head that is not due to an external noise.

To understand tinnitus it is important to also understand normal hearing. The auditory cortex, or hearing part of the brain, receives signals from outside the head (sound). These signals cause the nerves in the hearing part of the brain to fire off and it is this firing which we perceive as music, or speech or the dog barking.

Tinnitus is caused by the nerves in the hearing part of the brain, or auditory cortex, firing as though there are external sounds. The nerves are 'making up' noise – you hear this as the phantom sounds of whistling, buzzing, roaring or hissing and in some cases music. Watch our [online video](#) for more information.

Every person with tinnitus has their own very personal tinnitus tone. It can be a high or low frequency sound, several sounds together, and its volume can vary over time.



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What causes tinnitus?

The main cause of tinnitus is some degree of hearing loss. This hearing loss does not necessarily have to cause any problems in everyday life.

There are many triggers for tinnitus such as exposure to loud noise; ear or head injuries; disease of the ear and ear infections; side effect of medication; or a combination of these. Tinnitus is affected by stress, anxiety and other emotional disorders.

Tinnitus types

There are a number of types of tinnitus:

Subjective tinnitus

This is by far the most common type of tinnitus

Subjective tinnitus is a persistent noise that can only be heard by the person who has it. It can be single or multiple tones which can be either high or low in pitch. Subjective tinnitus sounds can also be buzzing, a hissing or a roaring sound. It is a consistent sound which does not vary widely over time.

Many people with subjective tinnitus will report that they have difficulty hearing because of the internal sound of the tinnitus symptoms.

Objective tinnitus

This type of tinnitus is uncommon. On close examination, objective tinnitus can be heard by others and is caused by a problem with the blood vessels, an inner ear bone condition or muscle contractions.

Pulsatile tinnitus

Pulsatile tinnitus is a form of objective tinnitus which is a persistent rhythmic noise, heard by the patient only. It will appear to be heard in time with a person's heart beat.

Pulsatile tinnitus is caused by some change in blood flow in the vessels near the ear or to a change in awareness of that blood flow. If you are experiencing this you should go to your GP to have a check up as soon as you can.

Musical tinnitus (Musical Hallucination)

People with musical tinnitus will say that they can hear music when none is being played.

It is a rare condition and is different from the hissing and buzzing which people with subjective tinnitus perceive. While it might seem to be a better alternative to subjective tinnitus, musical tinnitus can be very distressing due to the continual and repetitive nature of a tune.

Visiting your doctor

It is sensible to visit your GP if you suddenly experience tinnitus. They will check your ear health, arrange the removal of wax blockage in the ear canals for example, and can quickly refer you if there are other health issues which need addressing.

With clinics in Harley Street and across the UK

Call us on 0203 597 4988 or visit our website www.thetinnitusclinic.co.uk



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