

TINNITUS AWARENESS WEEK

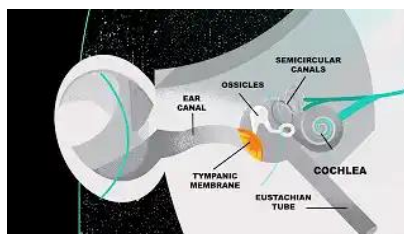
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Subjective Tinnitus (pronounced tin-NY-tus or TIN-u-tus) is the perception of noise, ringing, buzzing, clicking, roaring, hissing, and/or humming in the ear(s). Tinnitus is not a condition, but rather a symptom of an underlying condition.

The following video is a great place to start!



Why Do I Have This Noise In My Ears?

Following along with the above video.. Scientists *still* haven't come to a consensus on what happens in the brain to create this *illusion* of sound.

Tinnitus could be the result of the brain's neural circuits trying to adapt/compensate for damage of sensory hair cells (inside the organ of hearing) by altering central nervous system activity and/or turning up sensitivity to sound. This would explain why some people with tinnitus experience **hyperacusis** (heightened sensitivity) to sounds.

Some compare tinnitus to chronic pain syndrome, where pain persists even after damage to the body has healed...

Common causes for tinnitus include:

- Noise-induced hearing loss
- Sudden Hearing Loss
- Ear and sinus infections
- Diseases of the heart or blood vessels
- Ménière's disease
- Head Injury/TBI
- Hormonal changes
- Thyroid abnormalities
- Medication Interactions.
200+ drugs are known to cause tinnitus when you start or stop taking them
- Chemotherapy/Radiation

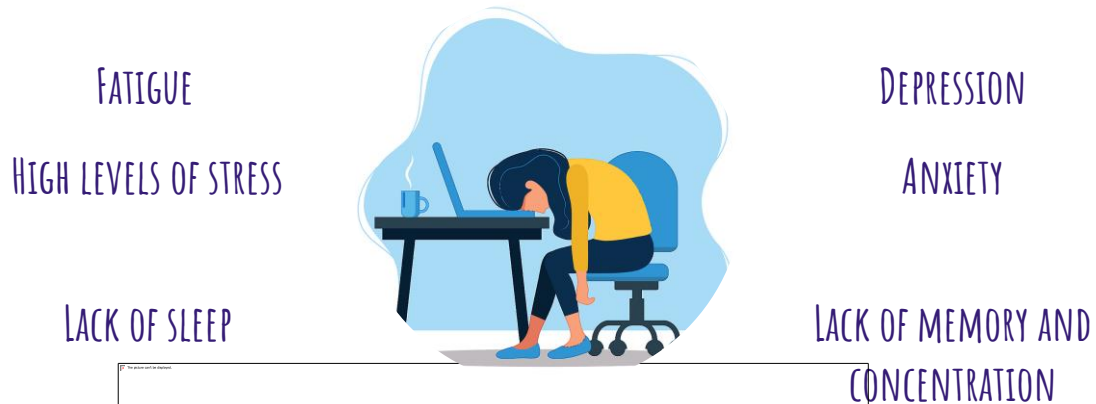


Tinnitus and Our Emotions

The neural circuits involved in hearing aren't *only* dedicated to processing sound.

They also communicate with other parts of the brain, like the **limbic system that regulates mood and **emotion.****

Most of the time, tinnitus isn't a sign of a serious health problem, however, tinnitus can often lead to:



This can be especially true for individuals who have experienced a sudden onset of tinnitus associated with a traumatic or unexplained event. Tinnitus can cause feelings of isolation without many places/people to turn to who understand.

How can we regain control when we feel so out of control?

Seeking Management and Support

The first step is to seek out a licensed audiologist and otolaryngologist who can evaluate your history, hearing, and potential medical causes that can help us find recommendations/treatment best suited for your needs!

The most effective tinnitus treatment tools address the aspects of tinnitus that make it so difficult to manage: anxiety, stress, social isolation, hearing difficulties, and sound sensitivity.

There is no identified cure yet.. but there are a variety of treatments that help people gain a greater sense of control over their symptoms.

→ **Hearing aids:** can be one of the most helpful tools for people who have hearing loss & tinnitus. Appropriately fit hearing aids can improve access to sound and lessen the severity of your tinnitus through sound enrichment. New technology offers tinnitus management programs and direct Bluetooth streaming of tinnitus management applications!

→ **Tinnitus counseling:** a great opportunity to help you better understand your tinnitus & factors surrounding your tinnitus offering you a greater sense of control. Being educated about your tinnitus can help you change the way you think about and react to it. You might also learn



some things to do on your own to make it less noticeable, to help you relax during the day, or to fall asleep at night.

- **Wearable ear level maskers:** small electronic devices that fit in the ear and use a soft sound to help mask the tinnitus. A great alternative for individuals with normal hearing who may need tinnitus management support.
- **Sound generators:** Placed near your bed, can aid in relaxation or sleep by playing soundscapes. Many sound generators can play from your phone (set on timers) for bedtime use/breaks throughout the day. See some of these recommended Mindfulness, Sleep, Meditation, Sound therapy [apps](#) from the American Tinnitus Association.
- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** a referral for intervention that aims to reduce symptoms of various depression and anxiety surrounding tinnitus. CBT focuses on challenging and changing thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, improving emotional regulation, and the development of personal coping strategies that target solving current problems.

**Our Audiologists and Otolaryngologists at
Queen City Ear, Nose, & Throat pride
ourselves in providing all of our patients with
a personalized, informed, research based
approach to their needs.**

If you or a loved one are experiencing tinnitus (**no matter the severity**), our offices are readily available to provide an evaluation, consultation, and treatment recommendation best suited for you. The first step is reaching out!



(704) 703-1080 or book an appointment online today!

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References

American Tinnitus Association: <https://ATA.org>



National Institute on
Deafness and Other
Communication Disorders

<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/tinnitus#6>