

### What is Tinnitus?

Tinnitus is a term referring to your body's perception of noise or ear irritation. It is often described as ringing in the ear by most people. On its own, it is not a medical condition; it is a symptom indicating an underlying disease. It is often described as buzzing noise in the head that doesn't go away. You are the only one that can hear this sound. Don't be scared; it is not a psychological problem or your imagination, It is authentic despite the fact that you hear it alone. The pain or noise can be present in any part of the head or both ears.

There are different types of tinnitus based on the intensity of the noise; It can be intermittent, continuous, or pulsatile depending on the strength of the noise. The sound is often heightened in a serene environment which is why it is worsened at night or in a tranquil setting. In some rare cases, people experience pulsatile tinnitus (The pulsating sound synchronizes with the heartbeat of the patient).

Over 50 million Americans are suffering from tinnitus and it can affect their day to day activities. It can lead to insomnia and loss of concentration. There are different types of tinnitus depending on the intensity of the noise.

### Types of Tinnitus

There are different types of tinnitus depending on the etiology and intensity of the noise and symptom. The two primary types of tinnitus include:

- Subjective Tinnitus: This is a type of tinnitus that the patients are the only one hearing the buzzing noise. The noise is more internal and is usually caused by damage to the auditory pathway or nerves. Infections from any part of the ear (outer, middle, or lower) could also cause subjective tinnitus.

- Objective Tinnitus: Contrary to its subjective counterpart, the noise from this type of tinnitus can be heard by the doctor during the examination. It is more severe, and the medical practitioner can listen to the buzzing sound during the examination. It is primarily caused by damage to the ear blood vessels, muscular problems, or trauma and infection of the middle ear. This type tinnitus can only be diagnosed by the medical doctor during the examination.

### Causes of Tinnitus

Before we start talking about the causes and risk factors of tinnitus, we need to understand the physiology of hearing; there are numerous tiny hair cells inside our ear, sound waves move them and send electric signals to the brain, the brain interprets these electrical signals as sound. This is the normal physiology of hearing; however, when these hair cells are bent or traumatized, it can lead to hearing impairment or hearing loss. Inner ear cell damage is the most common etiology of hearing loss and tinnitus. Moreover, there are other risk factors and causes of these symptoms. The most common causes and risk factors for tinnitus include:

- Age: It has been discovered that the chances of having tinnitus increase with age. It is more common in people older than 60 years old. Most geriatrics develop hearing loss as they grow older leading to tinnitus. Presbycusis is a hearing loss that causes tinnitus.

- Noise: The human ear responds differently to sound waves and noise depending on their intensity and decibel. Temporary exposure to loud noise such as in a concert could predispose to short-term tinnitus, Whereas, long-term exposure to excessive noise can cause permanent hearing loss and tinnitus.

- Earwax: Earwax is the natural protective substance of the ear and helps in preventing infections from invading the body, In some specific scenarios, there is an excessive accumulation of ear wax leading to tinnitus

## Symptoms of Tinnitus

The primary symptom of tinnitus is a phantom noise that can come in different amplitude and forms. The common types of phantom noise include:

- Ringing
- Buzzing
- Roaring
- Hissing
- Clicking

Tinnitus is not a medical condition but a symptom that indicates the presence of an underlying disease or infection. It is medically advisable to see your **doctor** as soon as possible when you start noticing those annoying sounds in your ear. The best form of treatment can be prescribed by otolaryngologist because it is their area of specialization.

### **Can Hearing Aids Help Tinnitus?**

Yes, hearing aids can help with the treatment of tinnitus especially in a patient suffering from Presbycusis.

It is more effective in people suffering from hearing loss-induced tinnitus. There are numerous tinnitus masks that help to mask out the annoying noise heard during tinnitus. One of the most effective forms of eliminating this treatment is using tinnitus hearing aids.

### **Is there a Tinnitus Anxiety Connection?**

Research has revealed that tinnitus can lead to stress and anxiety, however, most tinnitus patients get worse when they are stressed or anxious. Most people living with tinnitus are hypersensitive to threatening information; they also develop insomnia due to increased anxiety. Tinnitus patients get very worried during bedtime. They are commonly concerned with developing tinnitus induced insomnia.

There are several ways to overcome anxiety tinnitus, the most common treatment for anxiety tinnitus includes:

- Biofeedback: This method involves the control of your body with your thoughts through an electrical sensor.
  
- Relaxation techniques: Meditation and deep breathing help in eliminating anxiety tinnitus by acting as a form of relaxation.
  
- Hearing Aids: Tinnitus masks and various hearing aids help in the treatment of anxiety tinnitus.

Tinnitus itself is not dangerous but could be annoying and bothersome. The best and safest way for us to eliminate those annoying buzzing sounds is to contact a doctor who can help you.

\*This article first appeared at [www.checkbiotech.org](http://www.checkbiotech.org)

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# Tinnitus Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment Options

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