

## Tinnitus

If you hear ringing, hissing, buzzing, humming, chirping, or other noises in your ears or head, it is called tinnitus and pronounced either tin-it-tus or tin-eye-tus, either is correct.

Most cases of tinnitus are subjective, that is perceived only by the person with the disorder and not necessarily generated by any outside noise source.

Tinnitus can result from damage anywhere along the auditory pathway. Therefore, it is often difficult to find the cause and suitable treatment. **It is well known that exposure to loud noise can result in tinnitus and make it worse.**

Other common causes include:

- Wax pressing on the ear drum
- Meniere's Disease,
- Otosclerosis
- Acoustic neuroma
- Inherited abnormalities of the ear
- Diabetes which may result in a sensorineural hearing loss
- Strained muscles of the neck from arthritis, whiplash, clenching one's teeth or temporo-mandibular joint dysfunction (TMJ)
- Scuba diving
- Ototoxic medications
- High blood pressure
- Diet/smoking
- Stress

Much can be done to provide treatment for tinnitus. No longer is it necessary to "just go home and live with it". If you experience tinnitus, you should be certain to mention it to your family physician who may then refer you to an otolaryngologist (ENT doctor) and audiologist for further evaluation and care. Treatment options may include:

- Medications
- Masking
- Hearing Aids (if a hearing loss accompanies tinnitus)
- Biofeedback
- Acupuncture
- Hypnotherapy
- Stress reduction
- Diet modifications



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The American Tinnitus Association (ATA) is an excellent resource for additional information about tinnitus and the available help. Their contact information is: [www.ata.org](http://www.ata.org) or 800-634-8978. They publish *Tinnitus Today*, an excellent magazine that is sent with your membership in the organization. They can provide numerous book references upon request.

**“That Buzzing Sound: The Mystery of Tinnitus”**

**By Jerome Groopman**

**Published in *The New Yorker*, February 9 & 16, 2009**

“A report from the Department of Veterans Affairs estimated that nearly seventy thousand of the 1.3 millions soldiers who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan are collecting disability for tinnitus, and more than fifty-eight thousand are on disability for hearing loss. “

Excerpt from *The New Yorker*. To read the whole article go to

[http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/02/09/090209fa\\_fact\\_groopman](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/02/09/090209fa_fact_groopman)