

TINNITUS



Neuroscientists at Georgetown University Medical Center and Germany's Technische Universität München have uncovered the brain malady responsible for tinnitus

What is tinnitus? Tinnitus is commonly described as a ringing in the ears, but it also can sound like roaring, clicking, hissing, or buzzing. It may be soft or loud, high pitched or low pitched. Roughly 10 percent of the adult population of the United States has experienced tinnitus.

Josef Rauschecker, PhD, DSc, director of the Laboratory for Integrative Neuroscience and Cognition at GUMC has recently discovered that the brain has been reorganized in response to an injury in its sensory apparatus, says. Tinnitus can occur after the ears are damaged by loud noise, but even after the brain reorganizes itself, it continues to "hear" a constant hum or drum.

What causes tinnitus? Tinnitus is a symptom that something is wrong in the auditory system, which includes the ear, the auditory nerve that connects the inner ear to the brain, and the parts of the brain that process sound. It can be the result of a number of health conditions, such as:

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| -Ear Wax | -Ménière's disease |
| -Ear and Sinus Infections | -Brain tumors |
| -Noise-induced hearing loss | -Hormonal changes in women |
| -Diseases of the heart and blood vessels | -Thyroid abnormalities |

Pulsatile tinnitus is a rare type of tinnitus that sounds like a rhythmic pulsing in the ear, usually in time with your heartbeat. This kind of tinnitus is most often caused by:

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| -problems with blood flow in the head | -brain tumors | -abnormalities in brain structure |
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What can make tinnitus worse? Over 750 medications, prescription, and OTC, are ototoxic and can cause or contribute to tinnitus. Too much caffeine, salt, NSAIDs, stress and lack of sleep may increase tinnitus symptoms.

Tinnitus Relief - Tinnitus may be relieved through the use of hearing aids. For those with tinnitus and hearing loss, often times the amplification at the appropriate frequencies alone will alleviate tinnitus while the hearing aids are worn. Some hearing aids are equipped with a tinnitus masker. A masking noise, such as white noise, pink noise, speech frequency or high frequency noise, is emitted through the hearing aids at an appropriate level to distract the brain from focusing on the tinnitus. A tinnitus therapy program consisting of tinnitus masking noise at a level just under the amplification for speech offers some relief. If tinnitus is a one specific pitch, a notch filter can be created in hearing aids to help reduce the intensity of the tinnitus over time.

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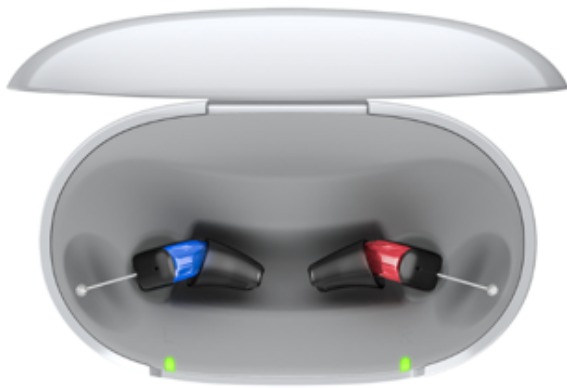


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