

Tinnitus Treatment

Tinnitus is commonly known as a ringing in the ears. However, tinnitus can also take the form of a variety of other sounds such as crickets, the ocean, roaring, buzzing, etc. Tinnitus affects 17% of the general population. Approximately 75% of those experiencing tinnitus are not bothered by it. For the remaining 25%, their tinnitus can negatively impact their life.

There are many causes of tinnitus. A medical and audiological evaluation are necessary to determine the cause and appropriate treatment options.

The initial evaluation for tinnitus management includes the following appointments:

- Initial Audiological, Tinnitus, & Hyperacusis Evaluation (2 hours): to obtain hearing thresholds, determine pitch & loudness of tinnitus, and screen for hyperacusis
- Medical Evaluation with an Ear, Nose, & Throat Physician: to determine any medically related cause for the tinnitus
- Initial Counseling Session (2 hours) ó This appointment is not covered by insurance: Reviews test results in detail, explains the neurophysiological model of tinnitus and TRT, explains the concept of habituating to your tinnitus, thoroughly explains appropriate treatment options available to patient

Tinnitus Retraining Therapy (TRT) was developed by Pawel Jastreboff, Ph.D. and is based on his neurophysiological model of tinnitus. This method of treatment requires two components ó directive counseling and sound therapy. Directive counseling focuses on reclassifying tinnitus as a neutral signal to the brain. This reclassification will in turn discontinue the reactions elicited by the Limbic and Autonomic Nervous System to the tinnitus signal.

Sound therapy may incorporate environmental sound enrichment, the use of ear level sound generators (SG), the use of hearing aids (HA), or the use of combination instruments (SG + HA in one unit). Specific treatment is based on the initial diagnostic evaluation.

The goal is to achieve habituation to the tinnitus. Habituation means the tinnitus is no longer perceivable unless the patient intentionally focuses on it. Even when it is perceivable it is no longer bothersome. Therapy addresses both the perception and reaction to the tinnitus. TRT typically requires a 9-18 month commitment.

What is Hyperacusis?

Hyperacusis is a decreased tolerance for sound. Approximately 40% of patients with tinnitus can also experience hyperacusis. Patients with hyperacusis can experience physical pain and discomfort to every day sounds. Hyperacusis is treated through the use of sound therapy to restore normal sensitivity to sound.

For further information or to schedule an appointment, please contact tinnitus@entaacare.com or call 410-760-8840, press option 5, x 607. Questions regarding specific treatment recommendations will not be answered prior to the initial evaluation.