

# Alliance

## Handshake

*April 2017*

Do you experience a ringing, buzzing, or hissing sound in your ears? If so, does the noise make you feel irritable or nervous? Does it interfere with your activities? If you have this perception of noise or ringing in your ears, you may have **Tinnitus (TIN-ih-tus)**, a common condition that affects about 1 in 5 people. While it is often bothersome, it is usually not a sign of something serious. It can worsen with age for many people. In many cases an exact cause of tinnitus is never found; however, certain treatments may prove helpful.

I want to dedicate this edition of our newsletter to Tinnitus. I encourage you to see your doctor if you develop tinnitus after a cold or upper respiratory infection and the tinnitus doesn't improve within a week. Also, see your doctor if you have tinnitus that occurs suddenly or without an apparent cause or if you have hearing loss or dizziness with the tinnitus.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter!

**-William Van Ry, Owner & CEO**

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It is very important to exercise the mind as well as the body. With each edition of our newsletter, we will include a memory word game for you to complete.

### Word Game

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Last issues word: **STERILE**

seer	sere	silt	sire
site	sleet	slier	slit
steel	steer	stela	stere
stile	terse	tier	tile
tire	tree	tries	elite
else	ester	reel	relies
relit	reset	resile	rest
rile	rise	rite	isle
islet	istle	leer	lees
lest	lire	list	lister
liter			

The average is 31 words. Did you meet or beat this average?

Can you find 41 words within this issue's word **DECLARED**?

## TINNITUS

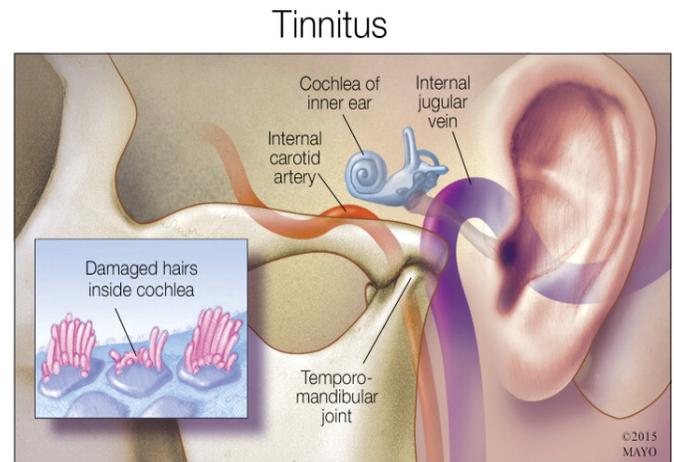
Tinnitus isn't a condition itself — it's a symptom of an underlying condition, such as age-related hearing loss, ear injury or a circulatory system disorder. Although bothersome, tinnitus usually isn't a sign of something serious. For many people, tinnitus can improve with treatments such as biofeedback, hypnosis, or stress control activities. These treatments can help you cope with the noise by reducing or masking it and making it less noticeable. Treating any identified underlying cause sometimes helps.

## SYMPTOMS

Tinnitus involves the annoying sensation of hearing sound when no external sound is present. Symptoms of tinnitus include these types of phantom noises in your ears: Ringing; buzzing; roaring; clicking; hissing. The phantom noise may vary in pitch from a low roar to a high squeal, and you may hear it in one or both ears. In some cases, the sound can be so loud it can interfere with your ability to concentrate or hear actual sound. Tinnitus may be present all the time, or it may come and go.

## CAUSES

In many cases, an exact cause is never found. A number of health conditions can cause or worsen tinnitus. One common cause is inner ear cell damage. Tiny, delicate hairs in your inner ear move in relation to the pressure of sound waves. This triggers ear cells to release an electrical signal through a nerve from your ear (auditory nerve) to your brain. Your brain interprets these signals as sound. If the hairs inside your inner ear are bent or broken, they can "leak" random electrical impulses to your brain, causing tinnitus.



Microscopic hairs form a fringe on the surface of each auditory cell in the cochlea. If hairs are damaged, they may move randomly, sending electrical impulses to your brain as noise, or tinnitus. Tinnitus can also be caused by turbulence in the carotid artery or jugular vein, and temporomandibular joint problems.

Other causes of tinnitus include other ear problems, chronic health conditions, and injuries or conditions that affect the nerves in your ear or the hearing center in your brain.

In many people, tinnitus is caused by one of these common conditions:

### Age-related hearing loss

For many people, hearing worsens with age, usually starting around age 60. Hearing loss can cause ringing in the ears.

### Exposure to loud noise

Loud noises, such as those from heavy equipment, chain saws and firearms, are common sources of noise-related hearing loss. Portable music devices, such as MP3 players or iPods, also can cause noise-related hearing loss if played loudly for long periods. Tinnitus caused by short-term exposure, such as attending a loud concert, usually goes away; long-term exposure to loud sound can cause permanent damage.

### Earwax Blockage

Earwax protects your ear canal by trapping dirt and slowing the growth of bacteria. When too much earwax accumulates, it becomes too hard to wash away naturally, causing hearing loss or

irritation of the eardrum, which can lead to tinnitus.

### **Ear bone changes**

Stiffening of the bones in your middle ear may affect your hearing and cause tinnitus. This condition, caused by abnormal bone growth, tends to run in families.

Some less common causes of tinnitus include:

### **Meniere's disease**

Tinnitus can be an early indicator of Meniere's disease, an inner ear disorder that may be caused by abnormal inner ear fluid pressure.

### **TMJ disorders**

Problems with the temporomandibular joint, the joint on each side of your head in front of your ears, where your lower jawbone meets your skull, can cause tinnitus.

### **Head injuries or neck injuries**

Head or neck trauma can affect the inner ear, hearing nerves or brain function linked to hearing. Such injuries generally cause tinnitus in only one ear.

### **Acoustic neuroma**

This noncancerous (benign) tumor develops on the cranial nerve that runs from your brain to your inner ear and controls balance and hearing. This condition generally causes tinnitus in only one ear.

### **Medications**

A number of medications may cause or worsen tinnitus. Generally, the higher the dose of these medications, the worse tinnitus becomes. Often the unwanted noise disappears when you stop using these drugs. Medications known to cause or worsen tinnitus include:

- **Antibiotics**, including polymyxin B, erythromycin, vancomycin and neomycin;
- **Cancer Medications**, including

mechlorethamine and vincristine;

- **Water pills (diuretics)**;
- **Quinine medications** used for malaria or other health conditions;
- **Certain antidepressants** may worsen tinnitus;
- **Aspirin** taken in uncommonly high doses (usually 12 or more a day).

## **RISK FACTORS**

Anyone can experience tinnitus, but these factors may increase your risk:

### **Exposure to loud noise**

Prolonged exposure to loud noise can damage the tiny sensory hair cells in your ear that transmit sound to your brain. People who work in noisy environments – such as factory and construction workers, musicians, and soldiers – are particularly at risk.

### **Age**

As you age, the number of functioning nerve fibers in your ears declines, possibly causing hearing problems often associated with tinnitus.

### **Gender**

Men are more likely to experience tinnitus.

### **Smoking**

Smokers have a higher risk of developing tinnitus.

### **Cardiovascular problems**

Conditions that affect your blood flow, such as high blood pressure or narrowed arteries (atherosclerosis), can increase your risk of tinnitus.

## **COMPLICATIONS**

Tinnitus can significantly affect quality of life. Although it affects people differently, if you have tinnitus, you may also experience fatigue, stress, problems sleeping, trouble

concentrating, memory problems, depression, anxiety, and irritability. Treating these linked conditions may not affect tinnitus directly, but it can help you feel better.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Does tinnitus lead to hearing loss?**

Tinnitus does not lead to hearing loss although it may seem to interfere with your ability to hear. It can, however, be a consequence of hearing loss.

### **Is there a treatment that can cure tinnitus?**

There is no treatment, either with or without drugs that offers a quick and reliable cure. An individually tailored rehabilitation program stands a good chance of improving tinnitus and its consequences. The key to living with tinnitus is to remove it from immediate attention.

### **Is tinnitus a sign of a brain tumor?**

Only very rarely does a benign tumor of the auditory nerve cause tinnitus. In most cases, this fear is unfounded and can be discarded after a medical examination.

### **What can I do to prevent my tinnitus from getting louder?**

There are no preventative diets or drugs. Adopt a healthy lifestyle and do everything that you feel is good for you.

### **Does alternative medicine offer any methods that are effective against tinnitus?**

Methods aimed directly at eliminating tinnitus have proved to be without effect. However, alternative methods can improve your general well-being and make it easier for you to deal with your tinnitus.

The logo features the word "Alliance" in a large, bold, black serif font. The letter "i" in "Alliance" is replaced by a black silhouette of two people shaking hands. To the right of "Alliance", the word "Handshake" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a background of vertical grey lines of varying thickness, creating a barcode-like effect.

**Alliance** Handshake