



SERTOMA SPEECH & HEARING CENTERS

## HEARING

# Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)

### What is tinnitus?

Often referred to as “ringing in the ears,” tinnitus can reveal itself with a variety of different perceived sounds, both tonal and pulsing.

Tinnitus is the perception of sound when no actual external noise is present. Only the person who has tinnitus can hear it.

People describe hearing a great range of different sounds from ringing, hissing, static, crickets, screeching, whooshing, roaring, pulsing, ocean waves, buzzing, and dial tones. Some people report hearing music.

### Are there different types?

The American Tinnitus Association describes three types of tinnitus, namely, tonal tinnitus, pulsatile tinnitus, and musical tinnitus. Let’s take a closer look.

#### Tonal Tinnitus

The perception of near-continuous sound (or overlapping sounds) with

well-defined frequencies. The perceived volume of the tinnitus often fluctuates. Tonal tinnitus is generally associated with subjective tinnitus.

#### Pulsatile Tinnitus

The perception of pulsing sounds, often in-beat with the patient’s heartbeat. Pulsatile tinnitus is often associated with objective and somatic tinnitus.

#### Musical Tinnitus

The perception of music or singing, sometimes the same tune on a constant loop. Also known as Musical Ear Syndrome, Musical Tinnitus is very rare. Other baseline facts include the following:

- Tinnitus is most common in adults (more males than females) between 40 and 80 years of age.
- Approximately 50 million Americans experience some form of tinnitus.
- Twelve million Americans suffer from tinnitus severe enough to

cause them to get medical help.

### What are the causes?

Tinnitus is a symptom associated with an array of other health conditions. While not a disease in and of itself, it is symptom of some other underlying health condition.

In most cases, tinnitus is a sensorineural reaction in the brain to damage in the ear and auditory system. While tinnitus is often associated with hearing loss, there are roughly 200 different health disorders that can generate tinnitus as a symptom. Below is a list of some of the most commonly reported catalysts for tinnitus.

If you are experiencing tinnitus, you should see your audiologist or physician for a full examination to diagnose the underlying cause of symptoms.

*Please note that tinnitus by itself does not necessarily indicate any one of the items listed below.*

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For directions and office hours:

[SERTOMACENTER.ORG](http://SERTOMACENTER.ORG)

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- Hearing loss, age-related and noise induced
- Obstructions in the middle ear
- Head and neck trauma
- Temporomandibular joint disorder (TMJ)
- Sinus pressure and barometric trauma
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Ototoxic drugs

Other diseases and medical conditions can cause tinnitus, such as

- Metabolic Disorders (hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, anemia)
- Autoimmune Disorders (Lyme disease, fibromyalgia), High-blood pressure, atherosclerosis)
- Psychiatric Disorders (depression, anxiety, stress)
- Vestibular Disorders (Meniere's disease, Thoracic Outlet Syndrome)
- Tumor-Related Disorders (rare): Acoustic Neuroma, Vestibular Schwannoma, and other tumors.

## Demographics of tinnitus

Approximately, 50 million Americans experience some form of tinnitus. Some groups, however, have a higher risk due to their age, occupation, or recreational pursuits. High-risk groups include:

### Senior Citizens

The primary driver of tinnitus is hearing loss. Age-related hearing loss tends to accelerate after 60.

### Active Military Personnel and Vets

Tinnitus is a significant and growing

problem for America's military personnel. Exposure to gunfire, explosives and loud machinery puts military personnel at high risk of noise-induced hearing loss and tinnitus.

### Working in Loud Environments

Agriculture, mining, construction, manufacturing, and transportation are all high-risk occupations for tinnitus.

### Musicians and Music Lovers

Musicians who spend their working life playing loud, amplified music are in danger of developing tinnitus—and their fans too because listening to loud music, whether live or recorded, can cause noise-induced hearing loss.

### Motorsports and Hunting Enthusiasts

Proximity and repeated exposure to loud engines and firearms make these activities particularly risky for tinnitus.

### People with a Prior Behavioral Health Issues

Patients with a history of depression, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive disorder may be particularly prone to experiencing tinnitus.

## Do you suffer from tinnitus?

If you do or have questions about tinnitus, call our office nearest to you to talk with an audiologist or to schedule an appointment.

Since 1978, our team of audiologists have provided standard-setting clinical diagnostics to thousands of patients, many with tinnitus. If you

schedule an appointment, your audiologist will diagnose the type of tinnitus you have and discuss the best treatment options for your type of tinnitus.

## Our healthcare mission

Our purpose is to help people find solutions to their speech and hearing challenges so they can hear the sounds of life and communicate with ease.

Give us a call and let's start a conversation about your tinnitus so we can find a solution for you

Sertoma Speech & Hearing Centers is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit providing professional hearing and speech-language healthcare since 1978.

