

Understanding Tinnitus: Ringing in the Ears

What is Tinnitus?

- Tinnitus means hearing noises that come from inside your body, not from the outside world. It's common, and while sometimes bothersome, it's usually not a sign of a serious problem.
- Tinnitus may even go away on its own.

What Does Tinnitus Feel Like?

- It's different for everyone, but you might hear:
 - Ringing, buzzing, humming, grinding, hissing, whistling
 - Music or singing
 - Noises in time with your heartbeat (this needs medical attention)
- You might have hearing loss or be more sensitive to everyday sounds.
- Tinnitus might come and go, or be constant.

When to See Your Doctor

- If tinnitus happens often or all the time
- If it's getting worse
- If it bothers your daily life (sleep, concentration, mood)
- If it pulses with your heartbeat

How is Tinnitus Diagnosed?

- Your doctor will check your ears for simple causes like infection or wax buildup.
- They'll do a hearing test.
- Sometimes, further tests or a specialist referral might be needed.

What Causes Tinnitus?

- It's not always clear, but common links are:
 - Hearing loss (age-related or from loud noise)
 - Ear problems (infections, wax, damage)
 - Some medications
 - Rarely, conditions like Ménière's disease

Can Tinnitus Be Treated?

- There's no one-size-fits-all cure, but there's lots of help!
- If there's a treatable cause, fixing that might help.
- Otherwise, the focus is on managing tinnitus:
 - Sound therapy (white noise, fans)
 - Counseling or CBT to help you cope
 - Tinnitus retraining therapy (TRT)
 - Hearing aids (if you have hearing loss)
 - Avoiding things that worsen it

Important:

- You're not alone! Tinnitus is common.
- There are ways to live well with tinnitus.
- Talk to your doctor to find the best help for YOU.

More Information:

- British Tinnitus Association: www.tinnitus.org.uk
- Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID): www.rnid.org.uk