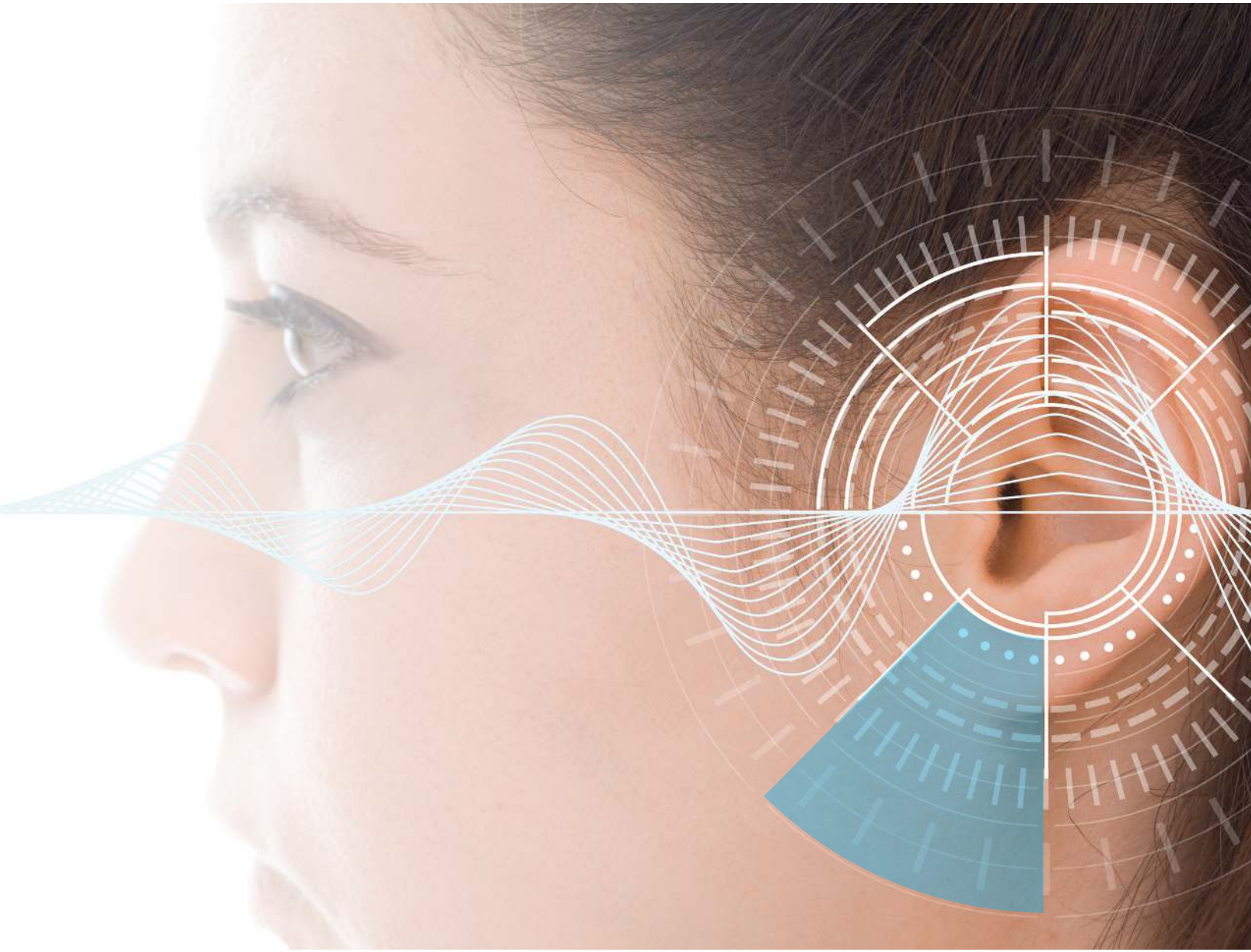


ASSOCIATED
AUDIOLOGISTS



TINNITUS: HOW AN AUDIOLOGIST CAN HELP

Tinnitus affects millions

According to the American Tinnitus Association (ATA), tinnitus affects approximately 50 million Americans to some degree. Of these 50 million people, 16 million have symptoms severe enough that they seek medical attention, and 2 to 3 million cannot function “normally” on a day-to-day basis. Tinnitus is a very common condition, and there is a relatively high probability that you or someone you know suffers from tinnitus.



What is that “ringing?”

Tinnitus is defined as the perception of sound when no external sound source is present—when you hear something that isn’t there, like a constant ringing, buzzing or humming sound. This is the result of changes in the auditory system, which lead to an increase in neuron activity from the inner ear to the brain. Your brain interprets this increase in nerve activity as sound. Often, the brain perceives the sound for the majority of the day, or just in quiet situations. With increased awareness to the tinnitus sound, emotional disturbance (irritation, frustration, anger, etc.) can result.

This sound can take on a number of characteristics, and is a sound that only you can hear. You may experience tinnitus that varies from soft to loud and from low-pitched to high. You may describe your tinnitus in a number of ways, including a buzzing, ringing, white noise, crickets chirping and/or roaring sound. Although these descriptions are typical, each individual’s experience can be different.

How you describe your tinnitus can give your provider important clues about possible causes. For example, tinnitus that comes on suddenly may be the result of recent damage to the auditory system from an ear infection, or exposure to extremely loud noise.

What causes tinnitus?

Most commonly, damage to the inner ear causes tinnitus. This damage can occur from a number of sources, like exposure to very loud sounds throughout your life, or toxic medications that damage the ear. Something as simple as earwax also can cause tinnitus. In very rare cases, underlying medical conditions can cause tinnitus.

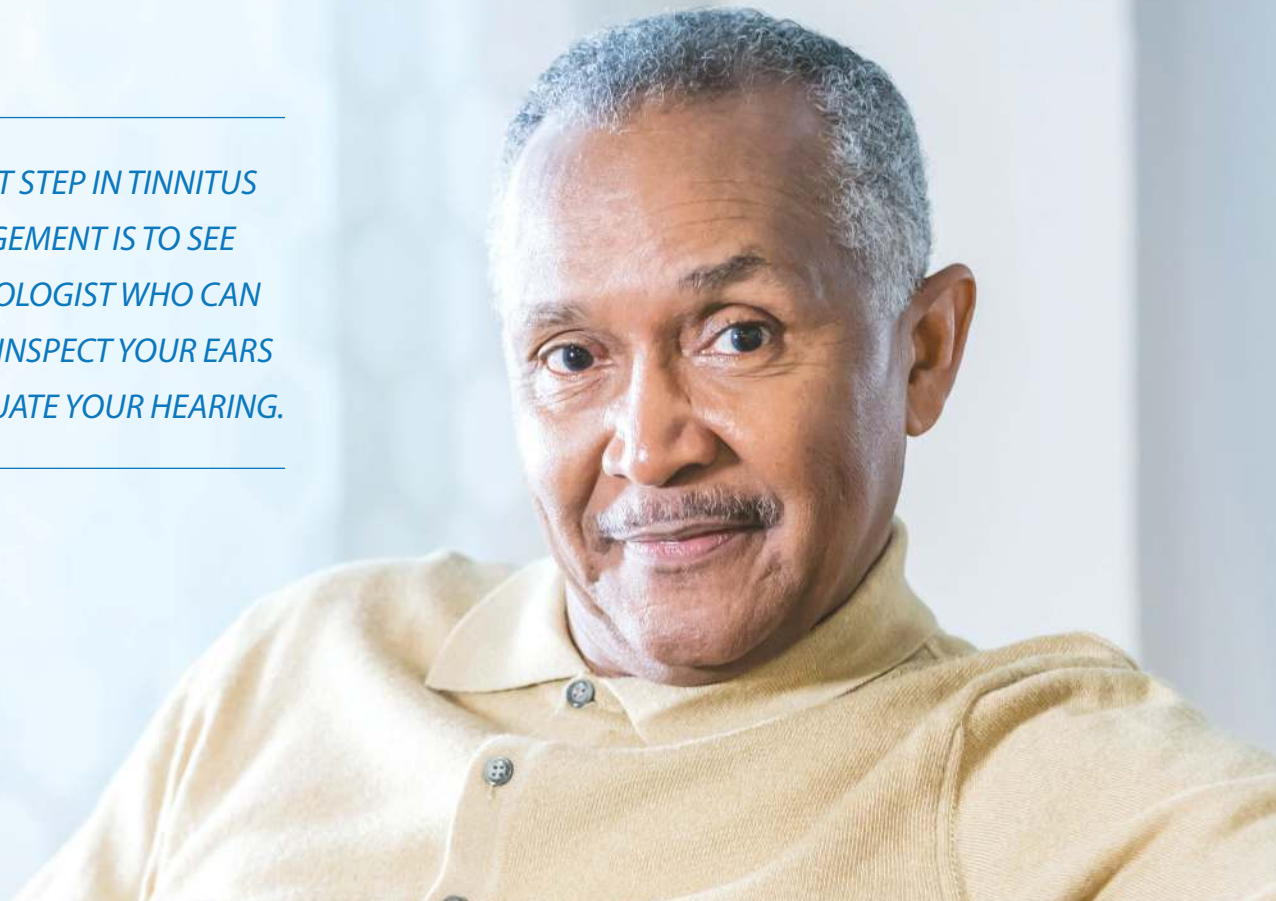
Stress and fatigue also have been shown to affect tinnitus. It's important to make time to relax and reduce your stress levels. Work with your audiologist to find a good support network, discover ways to reduce stress, and practice relaxation techniques.

Specialized tinnitus management may help you

If tinnitus affects your quality of life by interrupting your sleep, diminishing your performance at work, making tasks in your everyday life less enjoyable, or impairing your ability to concentrate, you may benefit from some form of intervention. In reality, if you feel that you need help, you probably do.

Tinnitus is most often related to inner ear damage. In these cases, an audiologist is the most skilled and appropriate professional to evaluate the problem. If your tinnitus is potentially caused by an underlying medical condition, appropriate referrals to a physician can be made.

*THE FIRST STEP IN TINNITUS
MANAGEMENT IS TO SEE
AN AUDIOLOGIST WHO CAN
VISUALLY INSPECT YOUR EARS
AND EVALUATE YOUR HEARING.*



Diagnosing tinnitus

Tinnitus management begins with a thorough audiological assessment, including a case history, hearing evaluation, and determination of tinnitus awareness and disturbance levels through subjective tinnitus rating scales and measurements performed in a sound booth. This assessment gives the audiologist an accurate picture of the type and severity of your tinnitus. It also establishes a reference point, and can assist in determining recommendations and other possible referrals.

Many options are available to reduce tinnitus

It's true that there is no cure for tinnitus, but sound therapy is an effective long-term tinnitus management option. Many types of sound therapy are available to promote habituation (desensitization) to tinnitus. For many patients, the initiation of sound therapy quickly brings relief from symptoms. With continued use, sound therapy can ultimately reduce the tinnitus awareness and disturbance. An audiologist can help determine which type of sound therapy may be most helpful for you.



A few examples of management options



Hearing Aids

For many patients with tinnitus, the latest digital hearing aids may be particularly useful in managing tinnitus. Some hearing aids include supplemental sound generator functionality (white noise or other sounds, such as chimes, played directly into the ear) that helps reduce the perception of tinnitus.

This makes it more difficult to consciously perceive tinnitus and helps the brain focus on outside, ambient noises. The impact of hearing aids is particularly strong for patients who have hearing loss in the same frequency range as their tinnitus.

Hearing aids also help by augmenting the external volume of activities such as a conversation, watching television or talking on the phone, above the perceived volume of tinnitus. As a result, these individuals may feel less personal frustration and social isolation.



FDA-Cleared Tinnitus Management Options

In some cases, other options may be necessary to manage the individual's tinnitus.

- ▶ **Neuromonics** is FDA-cleared, patented, and clinically proven to provide significant long-term relief from tinnitus. The Oasis is a customized sound therapy tool that uses modified music and relaxation tracks to reduce tinnitus awareness and disturbance. Patients usually experience relief early on in the therapy period. Continued use promotes tinnitus habituation. The Oasis Pro is now available using iOS-enabled devices.



Other sound therapy and management options

Other options for sound therapy may be self-directed, and can include devices such as music players, tabletop sound generators, and other masking devices. Lifestyle changes such as limiting noise exposure, use of hearing protection, incorporation of stress management and relaxation strategies, diet, and medications may also affect your tinnitus.



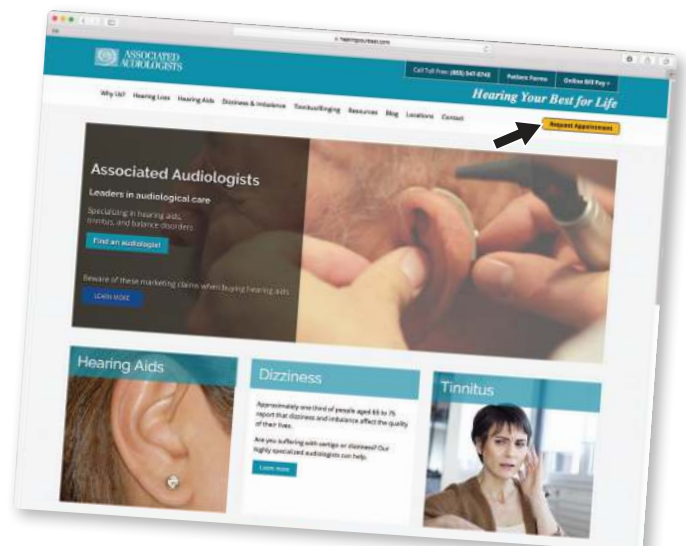
*TINNITUS IS A HIGHLY COMPLEX CONDITION
THAT REQUIRES AN INDIVIDUAL APPROACH
FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT.*

*TINNITUS IS NOT SOMETHING YOU
HAVE TO "LEARN TO LIVE WITH,"
SO IF IT IS DISRUPTING YOUR LIFE, SEEK HELP.*

Looking for more information?

Visit **hearingyourbest.com** for more information about tinnitus.

To schedule an appointment with one of our doctoral-level audiologists, call **855-547-8745**.



ABOUT US



Associated Audiologists, Inc., is the region's leader in audiologic care for hearing, tinnitus, and balance disorders. Established in 1985, the practice is independent and locally owned by Timothy C. Steele, Ph.D., President and CEO.

Associated Audiologists has grown to include seven convenient locations to serve you in Overland Park, Shawnee Mission, Prairie Village, Leavenworth and Manhattan, Kansas; and in North Kansas City and Independence, Missouri.

The Associated Audiologists team features professionals who use advanced diagnostic and verification technology to evaluate and manage hearing loss. The practice offers digital hearing aid products from the world's most respected manufacturers backed by unparalleled service. We also have experts who specialize in evaluating and managing tinnitus and sound sensitivity, and dizziness and balance disorders.

Each of our associates is a doctoral-level audiologist. As part of their doctoral training, these audiologists spend a final year completing an externship experience supervised by a licensed audiologist. Our audiologists are members of the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA) and hold certificates of clinical competence in audiology from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Many of our team members are also adjunct professors at the University of Kansas Medical Center.



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