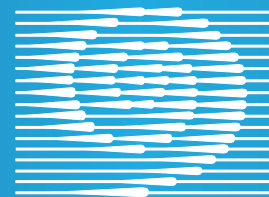
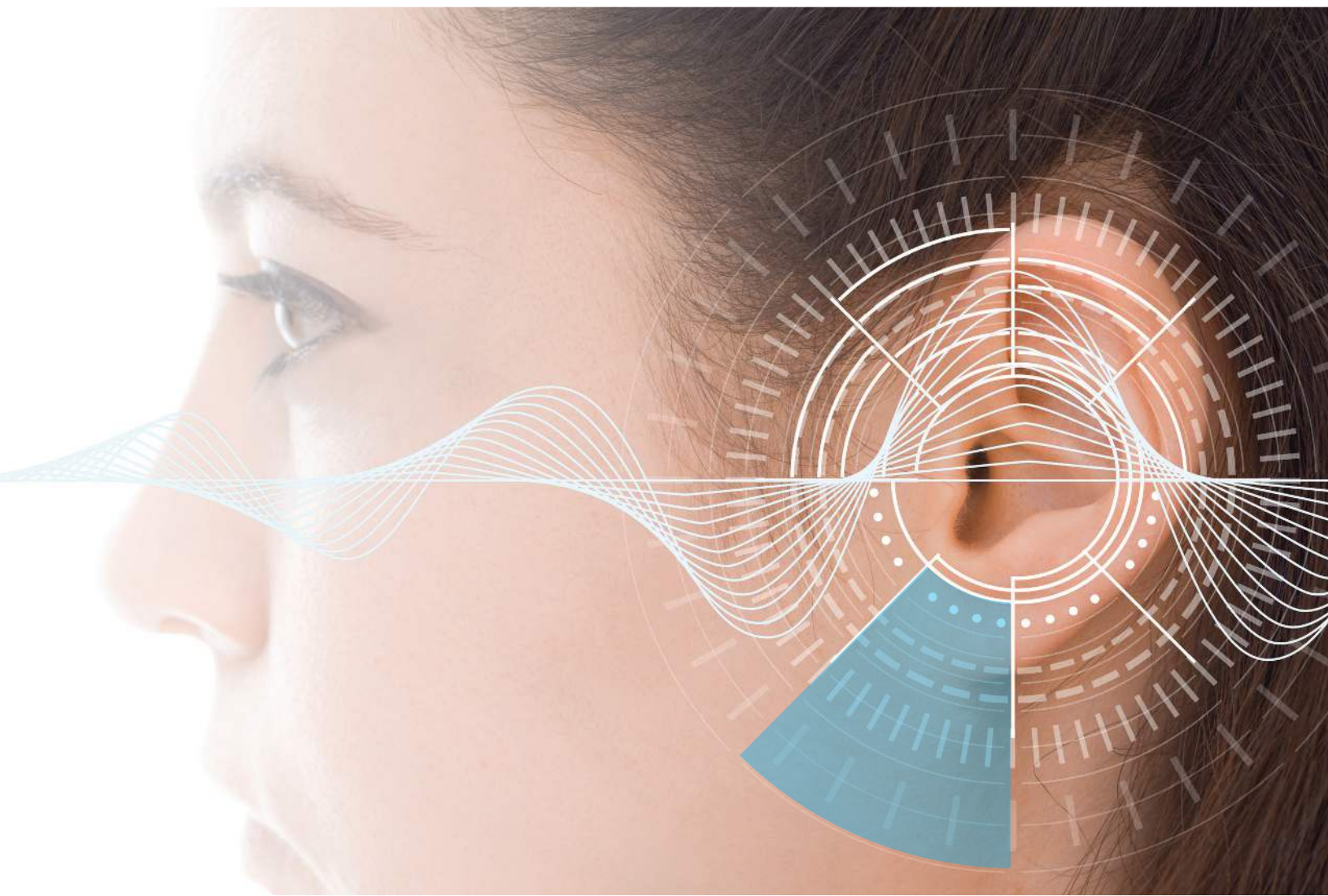


Leaders in Audiological Care for
Hearing, Tinnitus and Balance Disorders.



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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?

Tinnitus is a symptom rather than a disease. Most commonly 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.

In addition, there are several types of tinnitus, each of them differentiated by their cause and potential management options. The more common types include cervical tinnitus, subjective tinnitus, and objective tinnitus.

Cervical tinnitus is directly related to head or neck trauma. Subjective tinnitus is the most common type of tinnitus. Objective tinnitus is rare and usually has an identifiable cause.

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.

Tinnitus also can be temporary, especially if related to a sinus infection, stuffy nose, earwax, loud noise exposure or ear infection. Typically, when these issues are treated, the tinnitus will clear up.

Many options are available to reduce tinnitus

It's true that there is no cure for tinnitus, so don't be fooled by the hundreds of claims by over-the-counter tinnitus remedies. They simply have not been proven to work. However, 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.



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.



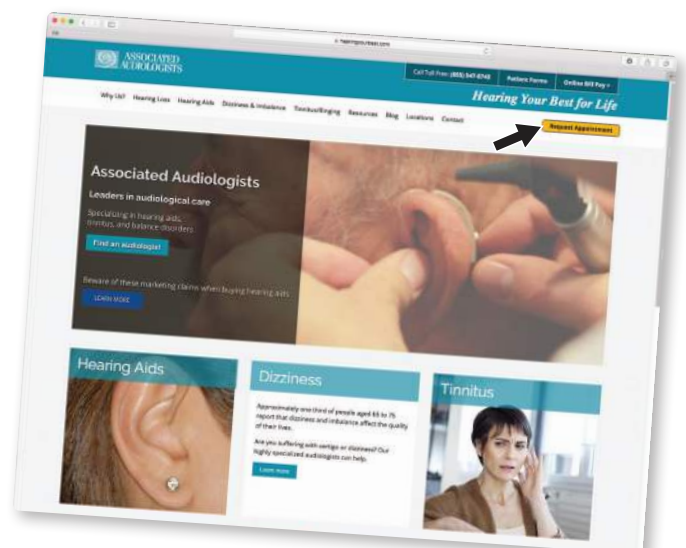
*TINNITUS IS A HIGHLY COMPLEX CONDITION
THAT REQUIRES AN INDIVIDUAL APPROACH
FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT.*

*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 ASSOCIATED AUDIOLOGISTS, INC.



Associated Audiologists, Inc., is the region's leader in audiologic care for hearing and balance disorders. The practice was established in 1985.

Today, it has grown to include multiple doctoral-level audiologists and eight convenient locations to serve you. The audiologists have allied health staff privileges at AdventHealth, Saint Luke's South, East and North hospitals.

They specialize in:

- Hearing Diagnostics
- Prescription Hearing Aids
- Tinnitus
- Dizziness and Balance Disorders

The Associated Audiologists team uses advanced diagnostic and verification technology to diagnose and treat hearing loss. Associated Audiologists offers digital prescription hearing products from the world's most respected manufacturers backed by unparalleled service.

The practice's audiologists also are leaders in local, regional and national professional audiology associations. All members of the Associated Audiologists team are certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and they are frequent presenters at educational conferences.

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