

# Tinnitus

## Information fact sheet

### WHAT IS TINNITUS?

Tinnitus is the awareness of noises in the ears or head that aren't present in your environment. It is very common and normal to experience tinnitus in quiet environments; approximately 17-20% of the population report that they have tinnitus of varying degrees. Some common causes include:

- A hearing loss: when the hearing organ is damaged, the structures responsible for sending the sound to your brain become more sensitive to soft sounds – this is what we perceive as tinnitus
- Stress and anxiety
- Other hearing related conditions
- Sometimes there is no identifiable cause

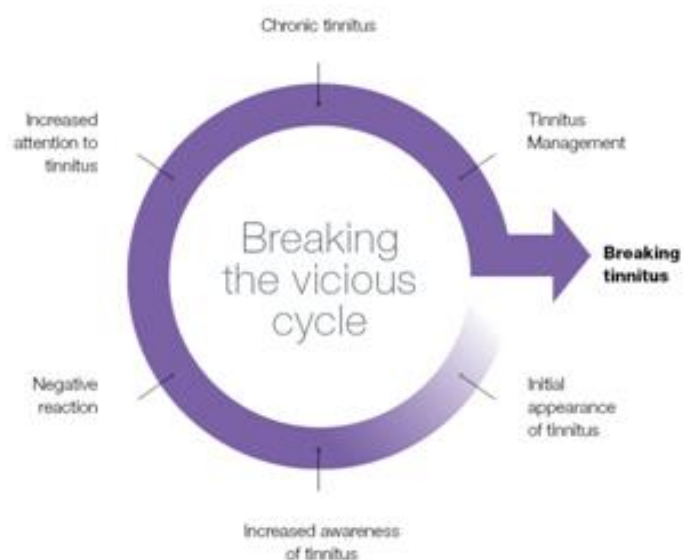
### HOW DOES TINNITUS AFFECT PEOPLE?

Tinnitus affects people in different ways. For some people, it may not greatly impact on quality of life much at all. For others, it can be debilitating and distressing, affecting work and social life. Some reactions include:

- Distress
- Sleep disturbances
- Irritability and frustration
- Poor concentration
- Mood swings

### WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT MY TINNITUS?

Tinnitus can start to cause distress as it creates a cycle – where you notice the ringing, become more anxious about it, which in turn makes the tinnitus appear louder.



The most important step is to get advice from your Audiologist who can help you rule out any ear health or hearing related conditions associated with your tinnitus. In a small number of cases, there may be a problem which requires further investigation by a medical specialist.

Once your Audiologist has helped you rule out anything that may have caused the tinnitus, you will be in a better position to minimise any impact it is having on your quality of life. There are no specific medications to effectively treat tinnitus. However there are lots of strategies you can use to reduce the annoyance of the tinnitus. These strategies are centred on acknowledging the tinnitus is there, but not allowing it to affect your lifestyle.

It may help to:

- Manage your stress (tinnitus is linked to stress)
- Improve sleep habits
- Limit caffeine and alcohol intake
- Play other sounds to distract yourself (it is best is to have the volume at a level where you can just hear both the music and the tinnitus)
- Limit noise exposure
- Consider hearing aids if appropriate

## **ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

### **Tinnitus Association of Victoria**

- Phone: 03 9770 6075
- Website: <https://tinnitus.org.au/>

### **Expressions Audiology Geelong**

- Phone: 1300 30 20 31
- Website: <https://audiology.expression.com.au/>

### **Dineen Westcott Moore Audiology**

- Phone: 03 9457 6588
- Website: <https://www.dineenwestcottmoore.com.au/>

### **Your local audiologist**

#### **Barwon Health Audiology**

- Phone: 03 4215 0827
- Website: <https://www.barwonhealth.org.au/services-departments/item/audiology-services>

