

# TINNITUS

**"Doc, what's this ringing in my ears?"**

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## What is Tinnitus?

Described as persistent ear noise with no corresponding outside noise source, tinnitus is a condition that approximately 18 percent of Australians will suffer from at some point in their lives. While often described as a high pitched ringing, it may also sound like a clicking, hissing or roaring sound.

Tinnitus is not a disease but a symptom that can result from a number of underlying causes. Usually hearing loss,

especially noise-induced hearing loss, will elicit tinnitus but other causes include ear infections, Meniere's disease, head injury and even ear wax. Also, acoustic neuroma's, which are tumours that grow along the auditory nerve, will usually create one sided tinnitus. As these tumours are life threatening, investigation of tinnitus by an audiologist and/or ear, nose and throat surgeon is always advisable.

## Treatment for tinnitus:

There are no effective medications for tinnitus with almost all forms of treatment involving combinations of counselling, sound enrichment (surrounding the tinnitus with pleasant sounds such as relaxation CDs) and if appropriate, the use of hearing aids.

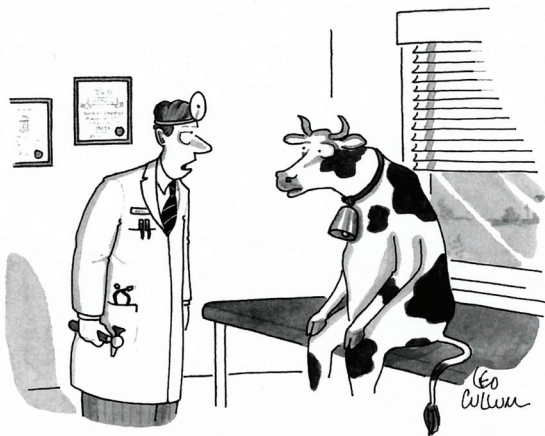
Tinnitus is particularly distressing when it is perceived as negative or threatening. Counselling to assist in a change of attitude to tinnitus will usually provide some relief and help move a patient to a state of habituation where the tinnitus may still be heard but attention to it is rarely given and emotional acceptance is achieved.

Habituation is a normal reaction to any persistent stimulus. Most therapeutic approaches to tinnitus management aim for tinnitus habituation to be achieved.



Tinnitus Retraining Therapy is based on the neurophysiological model of tinnitus, and is a treatment aimed at retraining the subconscious parts of the brain to ignore the tinnitus sound. Wearing hearing aids will also help mask tinnitus. People often blame their tinnitus for their hearing problems but the tinnitus is a symptom of the hearing loss, not the cause. Hearing aids can be effective in both the management of hearing loss and tinnitus. Hearing aids, by amplifying external sounds, will result in internal noise, or tinnitus becoming less noticeable.

**For more information or to make an appointment contact the Bendigo Hearing Clinic on 54425800 or visit [www.bendigohearingclinic.com.au](http://www.bendigohearingclinic.com.au)** ■



*"That ringing in your ears, I think I can help."*

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