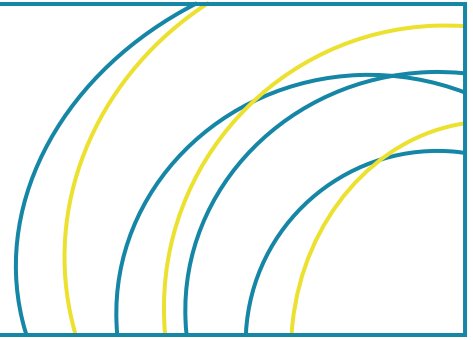


Better Life Through Better Hearing



Focus on: Tinnitus and Treatments

May, 2009

Approximately 20% of the population suffer from tinnitus to varying degrees. These people hear sounds when no external sound is present. It is a symptom of a malfunction of the auditory system. Tinnitus is most commonly heard as a ringing, hissing or buzzing noise but can even be heard as a clicking noise or any combination of these sounds.

Did You Know? Almost everyone will notice a temporary form of tinnitus when put in a sound-proof room such as an echoic chamber.

An increase in tinnitus may be due to the development of a hearing loss, exposure to loud sounds, ototoxic drugs or extreme stress or trauma. Tinnitus is a symptom in certain disorders of the auditory system such as Menieres Syndrome or an Acoustic Neuroma.

Most people find that they can adapt to their tinnitus over time and learn not to pay attention to it. If asked, they acknowledge they have tinnitus but that it does not annoy them.

Tinnitus becomes a problem if the brain focuses on the sound to such an extent that the sound effectively becomes magnified. These people are unable to adapt to their tinnitus as others can. They find their tinnitus overwhelming and very distressing. The more they focus on the tinnitus, the worse their reaction to it will become.

The emotional responses to tinnitus can vary widely but in the initial stages it can be very distressing. People with tinnitus often display the following behavior:

- Frequent mood swings
- Anxiety attacks
- Depression
- Tension
- Irritability
- Frustration
- Sleep problems

A tinnitus sufferer needs to be given accurate information and be made aware of the treatment and support services available rather than being told to "just get over it".

Initially, a tinnitus sufferer may need to be reassured that there is no underlying "nasty" cause such as a brain tumor or that they are developing a profound hearing loss.

Therapy: Tinnitus sufferers can be taught practical self-management strategies to help cope with the tinnitus. This may involve extensive counseling and training in stress management and relaxation as well as the use of noise generators and/or hearing aids.

Tinnitus and Hearing Aids: If a tinnitus sufferer has a hearing loss, then hearing aids can help to manage not only the hearing loss but also the tinnitus. Hearing aids amplify background noise and in doing so effectively mask out the tinnitus. Most people who wear hearing aids report their tinnitus improves.

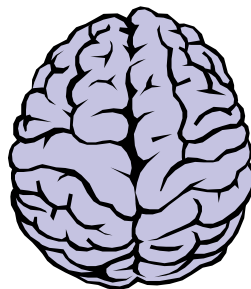
Diet: Caffeine, nicotine, alcohol and certain medications have been known to increase tinnitus.

For more information on tinnitus contact the Tinnitus Association of Victoria on (03) 9770 6075 or visit their website at www.tinnitus.org.au

Your Local Hearing Clinic:

- Professional and helpful advice
- No obligation hearing screening
- Subsidised services for eligible seniors
- Hearing aid trial period
- Custom made water, noise and music ear plugs
- Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)

We want to reduce the amount of paper used in our clinic. If you would prefer to receive reports or newsletters via email in the future, please contact us at: cl@hearingclinic.net.au



Manningham Hearing Clinic
...making hearing possible

Wireless CROS and BICROS Systems for Single-Sided Deafness

Under some circumstances, the poorer ear of a unilateral hearing loss is unaidable. The extent of the hearing loss may be so great that no hearing aid would be powerful enough or there may be distortion of the sound signal occurring at some point in the Central Auditory Nervous system.

The effects of an unaidable ear are well documented. The head shadow effect causes the signal from one side to drop by 6.4dB before it reaches the opposite ear. A lack of localization cues means that those with an unaidable ear have much more trouble understanding voices in background noise. There are also safety issues to think about, such as hearing oncoming traffic.

In the past, a wired CROS or BICROS system would have been the only option. This is where a microphone is placed on the unaidable ear and the signal is sent to the better ear via a cord



The WiFi wireless CROS and BICROS system from Unitron Hearing

placed at the back of the neck. These systems were very helpful for some, but in reality the size and awkwardness of the system resulted in an almost 50% rejection rate.

Wireless CROS and BICROS systems are now produced by a few hearing aid manufacturers. Radio frequency waves send the signal from the transmitter on the unaidable ear to the receiver on

the better ear. Wireless CROS and BICROS systems help in many situations; during meetings, when walking side by side, listening to a passenger when driving a car, listening in background noise situations (eg: restaurant).

Manningham Hearing Clinic has extensive experience in fitting wireless CROS and BICROS systems.



Manningham Hearing Clinic

...making hearing possible

Our Philosophy: We feel that the most expensive hearing aid is not always the best choice for a particular hearing loss. It depends on the user's lifestyle and listening requirements. We are able to help choose the most appropriate solution for your patients' listening needs.

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