

What You Should Know About Tinnitus

Tinnitus is the perception of sound where no external source exists. Those who are affected describe tinnitus as a “ringing, hissing, buzzing or whooshing,” perceived in one or both ears.

- ☞ **50 million** people in the United States experience tinnitus; of those, **16 million** have sought medical attention for their tinnitus and **2-3 million** are completely disabled from their tinnitus.
- ☞ Tinnitus is most often the result of **noise exposure**; either from a single impulse (extreme) noise, or cumulative exposure to noise. **Head and neck injury** are the second leading known cause of tinnitus.
- ☞ According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), tinnitus is the **#1 service-connected disability** for veterans from all periods of service – at the end of 2010, **744,000** veterans were receiving disability compensation for tinnitus alone.
- ☞ In 2010, the VA paid out over **\$1.1 billion** to veterans for tinnitus disability compensation – at the current rate of increase, disability payments to veterans for tinnitus is expected *to exceed \$2.26 billion* by 2014.
- ☞ Between all public and private funding combined in the U.S. for tinnitus research, there exists approximately **\$10 million**.
- ☞ A 2007 study of 900 musicians found that *at least 60%* report at least occasional tinnitus.
- ☞ **30 million workers** are at risk for tinnitus from Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) from hazardous noise on the job.
- ☞ The Centers for Disease Control report that nearly **13% of children**, ages 6-19 (5 million in the U.S.) already have some form of NIHL. This means they may also have tinnitus or they are at greater risk for developing tinnitus.
- ☞ A recent Department of Defense study on Iraq service veterans indicated that **70%** of those exposed to an explosive blast reported tinnitus within the first 72 hours after the incident; **43%** of those seen one month after the incident continued to report tinnitus.
- ☞ According to the National Institute on Occupational Safety and Health, **85 decibels for 8 hours** is considered to be “safe,” meaning it is *unlikely* to do damage. **Note: at that level, 7-8 people will still sustain some hearing damage.**

The American Tinnitus Association exists to cure tinnitus through the development of resources that advance tinnitus research.