



*Yvonne
Oliveira*

**311 Commercial St. Suite 109, Milton
905-875-3345 www.hearsay.ca**

Q: Is the Ringing in My Ears Normal?

A: Not at all. Tinnitus is the name for these head noises, and they are very common. Nearly 36 million Canadians suffer from this discomfort. Tinnitus may come and go, or you may be aware of a continuous sound. It can vary in pitch from a low roar to a high squeal or whine, and you may hear it in one or both ears. When the ringing is constant, it can be annoying and distracting. More than seven million people are afflicted so severely that they cannot lead normal lives.

What Causes Tinnitus? Most tinnitus comes from damage to the microscopic endings of the hearing nerve in the inner ear. The health of these nerve endings is important for acute hearing, and injury to them brings on hearing loss and often tinnitus. If you are older, advancing age is generally accompanied by a certain amount of hearing nerve impairment and tinnitus. If you are younger, exposure to loud noise is probably the leading cause of tinnitus, and often damages hearing as well.

There are many causes for "subjective tinnitus," the noise only you can hear. Some causes are not serious (a small plug of wax in the ear canal might cause temporary tinnitus). Tinnitus can also be a symptom of stiffening of the middle ear bones (otosclerosis). More frequently, tinnitus can often be the result of hearing loss which can be confirmed through having your hearing tested regularly.

Tinnitus may also be caused by allergy, high or low blood pressure (blood circulation problems), a tumor, diabetes, thyroid problems, injury to the head or neck, and a variety of other causes including medications such as anti-inflammatories, antibiotics, sedatives, antidepressants, and aspirin. If you take aspirin and your ears ring, talk to your doctor about dosage in relation to your size.

Having a hearing test done is often the first step in identifying the possible cause of tinnitus and any treatments that could follow. Visit an Audiologist to address questions regarding tinnitus.

Stay tuned next month for 'Treatments for Tinnitus'