

Ringling in the Ear (Tinnitus) in Post COVID-19 Recovery



Ringling in the ear, or tinnitus, can be a troublesome symptom following COVID-19. People usually describe it as a sound (whistling, ringing, hissing) that is sensed without being able to find an outside source that is causing it. Tinnitus is believed to be a result of abnormal nerve signals from the cochlea, a structure in your inner ear.

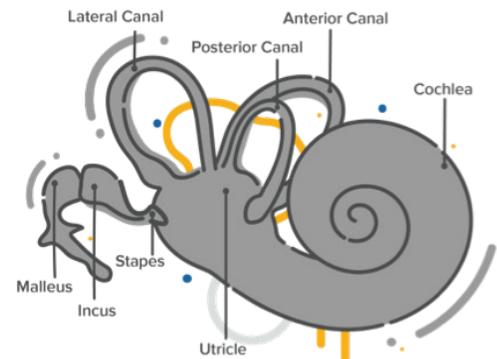
Tinnitus is common for a variety of conditions, including age-related hearing loss, and some people experience it after a concussion. It can be continuous or come on and off.

For some, tinnitus can be very loud and is often worse at night when everything else is quiet. Often tinnitus improves over time without any specific treatment.

What You Can Do To Reduce Tinnitus

The most common strategy to reduce tinnitus is the use of “white noise” or low volume background sound to dampen the loudness of the ringing. This can be done by having music or a radio on at low volume. Some people find it useful to have a white noise machine or use headphones to listen to music.

Distraction from focusing on the sound can also be helpful. As tinnitus tends to be worst in the evenings, many of these strategies can be used around bedtime to help with sleep.



When Should I See My Family Doctor About Tinnitus?

Sometimes, ongoing tinnitus can be a sign of more serious conditions that would need further medical assessment. If you have any of the following signs and symptoms associated with your tinnitus, you should see your family doctor:

1. Vertigo – dizziness with spinning sensation and nausea
2. Any pain or drainage of fluid from the ear
3. New hearing loss
4. Loss of balance or recurrent falls

For more information on how to support your understanding and management of symptoms as you recover from COVID-19, please visit www.phsa.ca/health-info/post-covid-19-care-recovery

