

Tinnitus Treatment Methods

A Brief Look At Differing Tinnitus Treatment Methods Because tinnitus can be a symptom of an underlying medical condition, individuals should undergo a full examination by a certified ear specialist. Individuals should also have a complete medical examination. Special attention should be given to blood pressure, kidney function, drug intake, diet, and allergies, as these factors are sometimes associated with tinnitus. Currently, there is no single treatment for tinnitus. Tinnitus treatment generally involves a multi-disciplinary approach and includes a variety of symptom management methods.

Conventional Drug Therapy: While many drugs have been researched and used to relieve tinnitus, there is no drug specifically designed for tinnitus treatment. For people with chronic tinnitus, drug treatments may offer some success. Drugs that have been studied and used to treat tinnitus include anti-anxiety, antidepressants, antihistamines, anticonvulsants and anesthetics. While many people have been successful in better managing their tinnitus symptoms, drug therapy can have serious side effects.

Alternative Treatments: Many people have experienced tinnitus relief from the use of herbal preparations, homeopathic remedies, and vitamin and mineral regimens. Others have benefited from acupuncture, cranio-sacral therapy, magnets, hyperbaric oxygen, or hypnosis. Some individuals find massage therapy and energy-work, such as reiki, to be beneficial treatments for tinnitus. Although some individuals have reported a mild allergic reaction to herbal preparations, most alternative treatments carry very little risk.

Cochlear Implants: A cochlear implant is a device that sends electrical sound from the ear to the brain. An electrode is threaded into the cochlea (spiral-shaped cavity of the inner ear) and a receiver is implanted just beneath the skin behind the ear. Because electrode implantation destroys any remaining healthy hair cells, cochlear implants are only prescribed to deaf or near-deaf patients.

Tinnitus Maskers: A non-medical option used to reduce or "mask" unwanted noise. Tinnitus maskers are worn like a hearing aid to produce a neutral white sound. Over 60% of patients with severe tinnitus report relief. A newer device is a tinnitus instrument, which is a combination hearing aid and masker. This device teaches the brain how to ignore tinnitus noise. Individuals must be tested and fitted for the tinnitus instrument.

Hearing Aids: Some tinnitus patients with hearing loss experience total or partial tinnitus relief while wearing hearing aids. Amplification from the hearing aid allows the aid wearer to hear background sounds, which takes away from the focus on the tinnitus noise.

Biofeedback: This relaxation technique has a 25-year history of successful treatment for pain and stress-related disorders. Biofeedback teaches people how to control certain body functions including pulse, muscle tension and skin temperature. The goal when using biofeedback for tinnitus treatment, is to decrease stress and anxiety levels that may be contributing to tinnitus. Biofeedback tinnitus therapy may require weekly sessions over several months before improvement is noticed. However, up to 80% of patients find some relief of their tinnitus symptoms and 20% have reported total relief.

About the Author

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