

What you should know about tinnitus

Tinnitus is defined as the perception of sound where no external source is present – those who are affected often describe tinnitus as ringing, hissing, roaring, buzzing or whooshing, perceived in one or both ears;

- ☞ Nearly **50 million** Americans experience tinnitus;
- ☞ **10-12 million** have tinnitus chronically and seek medical attention for their condition;
- ☞ **1-2 million** Americans are debilitated by their tinnitus – cognitive abilities are compromised and quality of life is ruthlessly reduced from their tinnitus;
- ☞ In 2001 The Centers of Disease Control (CDC) reported that nearly **13%** of children between the ages of **6-19** have some form of noise induced hearing loss which can cause and/or lead to tinnitus;
- ☞ In 2007 a study of 900 musicians found that at least **60%** report occasional tinnitus;
- ☞ Tinnitus is most commonly caused by noise exposure – According to the National Institutes on Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) maximum allowable noise exposure is **85 dBA** for eight hours and even at that level seven to eight people will still sustain hearing damage;
- ☞ **30 million workers** are at risk for tinnitus and noise induced hearing loss (NIHL) from hazardous noise on the job;
- ☞ Under-employment and unemployment due to NIHL costs **\$2.5 billion a year** with an additional **\$2 billion per year** in welfare and disability programs;
- ☞ Industry experts recommend that for every 3 decibel increase above 85dBA a person should cut their time exposure in half. For example, if **85 dBA** is “safe” for eight hours, then **88dBA** is “safe” for only four hours;
- ☞ Even though there are recommended maximum allowable exposure times, cumulative noise exposure even at “safe” levels can cause tinnitus over years;
- ☞ We are living in the age of amplified sound where many every day noise sources produce decibel levels that can be hazardous to our hearing and can result in tinnitus and other types of hearing loss - Here are some examples of every day noise sources and their respective decibel levels:

Noise Source	Decibel level (dBA)	Maximum allowable time exposure
City Traffic, Vacuum Cleaner	85	8 hours
Power Lawn Mower	90	4 hours
MP3 Player	105	7 minutes
Chainsaw	110	4 minutes
Rock Concert	115	1 minute or less
Piccolo	120	30 seconds or less
Jackhammer	130	15 seconds or less