



### Information Sheet – Tinnitus

Hopi ear candle treatments can, in my experience, help to diminish the noises in the ear. 3 treatments at weekly intervals are recommended after which on your therapists advice, maintenance of every 4-6 weeks. This can vary depending on severity of condition.

A persistent buzzing, humming, whistling or ringing in the ears afflicts about one in six adults at some point in their lives. Though there is no outright cure, vitamins, minerals and herbs can help by improving the circulation and nerve function in the head and the ears.

#### What it is

The medical name for persistent noise in the ears - tinnitus - is a Latin word meaning 'ringing'. In 99% of cases the condition does not interfere with day-to-day life, and only a third of tinnitus sufferers seek medical help for it. In certain people (usually those over 60) the ringing may become so intrusive that it interferes with sleep or leads to depression and anxiety. Many sufferers experience some degree of hearing loss.

#### What causes it

Most cases of tinnitus probably stem from repeated exposure to loud noise (rock music, gunshots or machinery, for example), which damages the nerves and tiny hairs in the inner ear that detect sound. Other causes include excess earwax, ear infections, excess alcohol consumption, poor circulation and the side effects of some medications such as antibiotics or aspirin. Recent research indicates that tinnitus probably involves a nerve malfunction in the brain, rather than just damage to the ear.

#### How supplements can help

For the many chronic cases with no treatable cause, supplements may be effective. The supplements listed can safely be used together, and will usually have to be taken long term, though benefits may be noticed within a month.

Because poor blood circulation to certain parts of the brain may affect the inner ears and cause ringing, the herb ginkgo biloba may relieve some cases, though its benefits may take weeks or months to be felt. Blood circulation can also be improved by concentrated garlic (taken with, or instead of, ginkgo). Other supplements may help by improving the health of the nerves - including those that lead to the inner ear. Vitamin B6 has beneficial effects on nerve function, as does vitamin B12, which the body uses to make myelin, a fatty substance that covers and protects the nerves and enables them to function efficiently. (Vitamin B12 should be taken with folic acid to prevent deficiencies



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of either B vitamin.) If your symptoms do not improve after three months, discontinue the regimen of B6, B12 and folic acid.

Magnesium also plays an important role in maintaining good nerve function and hearing. Low magnesium levels can cause blood vessels to constrict, inhibiting circulation in the brain. Insufficient zinc might contribute to tinnitus, because the inner ear has a higher concentration of zinc than most other parts of the body. Even a slight deficiency can worsen the hearing loss associated with ageing. Zinc interferes with copper absorption, so take a formulation that includes copper.

Several plants are used by herbalists to treat tinnitus, although their efficacy has not been proved by clinical trials. Depending upon its cause, one or more of the following may be prescribed: black cohosh, cayenne (chilli), echinacea, feverfew or hawthorn (for good circulation and nerve function), white willow or goldenseal (anti-inflammatories).

### What else you can do

- Cut back on caffeine, alcohol, nicotine and aspirin: they can exacerbate ringing in the ears.
- Ask your doctor for information about ear devices that cover up, or mask, tinnitus. Low-volume white noise, such as television or radio static, may also help.
- Exercise to improve circulation and so, possibly, to ease symptoms.
- Consider acupuncture to relieve the buzzing

### Blends & Dosage

Blend	Dosage	Advice
Ginkgo biloba	40 mg extract 3 times a day	standardised to contain at least 24% flavone glycosides
Garlic	400-600 mg dried concentrate four times a day with food	each tablet should provide 4000 meg allixin potential
Vitamin B6	50 mg once a day	not necessary if taking a vitamin B complex supplement
Vitamin B12 / Folic Acid	1000 meg vitamin B12 and 400 meg folic acid a day	take sublingual form for best absorption
Magnesium	200 mg twice a day	take with food; reduce dose if diarrhoea develops
Zinc	25 mg a day	if you take a zinc supplement for more than one month, use one that includes 2 mg copper



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#### Did you know?

Supplements of vitamin B12 may be especially important for treating tinnitus in older people because the body's ability to absorb this vitamin declines with age.

#### Facts and Tips

- Aspirin, especially if over-used, can cause ringing in the ears. If you suffer from tinnitus, avoid taking Aspirin
- Tinnitus often begins with isolated incidents and can become chronic with age
- Supplements may slow down progression of the disorder
- Loud noises may be the prime contributing factor to tinnitus
- To prevent further ear damage, wear earplugs, particularly if you are often exposed to noisy machinery, music or loud bangs.