

# Regional Specialists Tamworth ENT Clinic

## Tinnitus

### **CAUSE**

- Tinnitus is often caused by damage to the tiny hairs on cells within the inner ear
- Damage can be a result of normal aging, exposure to very loud noises, medications, injury or other disease
- Approximately 20% of Australian adults have tinnitus with severity ranging from mild (common) to severe (rare)
- Some of the most common sounds associated with tinnitus are ringing, buzzing, whistling, roaring and humming
- Tinnitus can be extremely debilitating, and people may suffer from distress, depression, mood swings, anxiety, irritability and sleep problems

### **TREATMENT**

- Currently there is no cure for tinnitus, so the aim of treatment is to reduce the impact of the tinnitus on your quality of life
- You need to accept that tinnitus is part of your life and try not to worry about it

# Tinnitus – Continued

## MANAGEMENT

- **Stress** will often make tinnitus worse so try measures to help reduce stress – massage, relaxation techniques etc
- **Loud noises** often make tinnitus worse – avoid loud noise exposure or wear ear protection
- **Diet** – caffeine (tea, coffee, chocolate or cola drinks), quinine (tonic water) and alcohol can exacerbate tinnitus in some people
- **Sleeping** – tinnitus is often worse at night time due to the lack of environmental noise. Try using a fan, white noise monitor, radio or TV to provide some background noise. There are Apps available for this too.
- **Cognitive behavioural therapy** – psychotherapy run by clinical psychologists is often helpful to reduce the impact of the tinnitus
- **Tinnitus retraining therapy** – using exposure to low level sounds to facilitate habituation to the tinnitus
- **Masking devices** – such as Neuromonics device (App available for smart phones), hearing aids
- **Medication** – no medical treatment will reduce the tinnitus. Anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medication may be indicated if this is relevant for you