



INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR TINNITUS PATIENTS

The Ear Nose and Throat of Georgia team of professionals are looking forward to working with you to manage your tinnitus. Below you will find information about how to schedule appointments and follow up with your treatment plan.

Step 1- Hearing test and Medical Clearance [Physician/Audiologist Visit]

It is necessary for you to see a physician (an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist/Otolaryngologist) who will be able to provide you with a full medical evaluation and a medical clearance before pursuing tinnitus therapy options. You will need to have a hearing evaluation performed by an audiologist at our facility before your visit with the physician. During this visit, a Tinnitus Assessment may be performed and billed to your insurance. The hearing test must be performed within six months of pursuing tinnitus treatment.

Note: If you were seen outside of ENT of GA, please bring your past hearing test and/or MRI/CT scans for review. Additional testing may be ordered depending on your individual treatment plan.

Step 2- Information Packet and Questionnaires

After your consultation with the physician, you will receive an information packet for review. This packet includes history forms and questionnaires that must be completed and returned prior to the next appointment. Please return the history questionnaires to the ENT of GA in the enclosed envelope.

Step 3- Individual Tinnitus Evaluation Appointment

Once the history and questionnaires are received, you will be called to schedule an appointment for an individual Tinnitus Evaluation and Tinnitus Assessment if it has not already been performed. This is a two hour appointment that consists of a review of your audiologic testing, tinnitus counseling and/or development of an individualized management plan. The cost for the Individual Tinnitus Assessment is **\$200.00** which is due on the same day as your evaluation.

This appointment will require about 2 hours of your time.

Tinnitus can often be so disruptive that people complain of having difficulty hearing. This

difficulty is actually caused by hearing loss. Tinnitus is just a symptom of ear damage that may be causing hearing loss. This appointment includes individualized counseling that focuses on the tinnitus and the non-medical options that are available. We will also cover basic information about the loudness and pitch of the tinnitus you are hearing.

Options for treatment include:

Hearing aids: Many people who have tinnitus also have hearing loss. Hearing aids can provide relief from the tinnitus by amplifying the sound that is not generally heard once hearing loss occurs. Hearing aids will also improve understanding by amplifying speech sounds.

Environmental enrichment devices (maskers): Listening to soothing music or recordings of nature or environmental sounds (such as ocean waves, rain forest, or bird calls) can also help mask the sound of tinnitus and reduce stress.

Tinnitus on-ear Maskers: These provide an alternative sound (white or pink noise) to mask out tinnitus. Habituation is not known to occur with maskers but many patients have stated that these maskers provide relief.

On-going counseling and relaxation techniques during the treatment: sometimes it can feel that the tinnitus defines your life. Naturally, the tinnitus may be the driving force to seek treatment. However, looking at the larger picture and treating the person as a whole, rather than a set of symptoms, can help life feel more balanced again. Some patients make changes in their exercise routines, eating habits, or recreation activities that are beneficial.

Widex Zen: This device looks like a hearing aid, it is also available as an amplification and tinnitus therapy combination device for those with hearing loss. It uses fractal tones in patterns of musical elements such as slower tempo (60-70 beats per minute), lower pitch, degree of repetition and lack of emotional content. These tones are designed provide a calming effect and help with habituation.

SoundCure Tinnitus Treatment: SoundCure is a clinically proven treatment protocol for tinnitus. It is a treatment that combines counseling and an electronic device which plays a patented amplitude modulated stimulus customized to the frequency and intensity of your tinnitus. Please see the enclosed brochures.

Step 4 - Fitting of Devices and Instruction in Use and Operation of your Device(s)

Your hearing aids or tinnitus treatment devices will be fitted on a second visit. You will be taught the basic care, use and maintenance of the device(s). Additional counseling sessions will be offered in order to provide you and your family with a better understanding of your tinnitus. This appointment will require approximately one hour of your time.

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Step 5- Follow- up

At this appointment, we will discuss your experiences using the treatment chosen for you. You will be asked to fill out one or two of the forms that you completed prior to your first visit. Your audiologist will use these results, called “outcome measurements,” to help evaluate your progress.

Insurance Information

It is important to know that tinnitus related charges are almost universally not a covered benefit by insurance companies. That is, despite the fact that various types of tinnitus treatment have existed since the 1970's, the acoustical evaluation of tinnitus and the non-medical management of tinnitus are considered “investigations” by many insurance companies. **Due to this, we are not able to bill your insurance company for your tinnitus counseling, tinnitus treatment, or hearing aids. In other words, your payment for these services and devices are due on the day that services are rendered and/or devices are delivered. However, if you wish to try to gain reimbursement from your insurance company on your own, we will be happy to supply you with an explanation of the services and the purpose of the devices.**

Enclosed: THI, TRQ, Initial Tinnitus Questionnaire