

## 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 for the tinnitus program.

### **Step 1- Hearing Test and Medical Clearance (Physician/Audiologist Hearing Evaluation Visit)**

You will need to have a hearing evaluation performed by an audiologist at our facility before your visit with the physician. The hearing test must be performed within six months of pursuing tinnitus treatment. It is necessary for you to see a physician who will be able to provide you with a full medical evaluation and medical clearance before pursuing tinnitus therapy options. The hearing test must be performed within six months of pursuing tinnitus treatment. Tinnitus questionnaires will be filled out at this visit (THI/TRQ).

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

### **Step 2- Individual Tinnitus Consultation Appointment (Audiologist)**

This one hour appointment consists of a review of our audiologist testing, tinnitus counseling and/or development of an individualized management plan. Hearing aids and/or tinnitus management devices will be demonstrated during this session. The cost of this consultation is \$100 and is not covered by insurance.

#### **Options for Treatment May Include:**

Hearing aids: Many people who have tinnitus also have hearing loss. Hearing aids can provide relief from tinnitus by amplifying the sound that is not generally heard once hearing loss occurs. This provides more contrast between the tinnitus and what is heard in the environment. Hearing aids also improve understanding of speech sounds. This reduces frustration and anxiety which can also lead to more bothersome tinnitus.

Hearing aid combination devices: Some hearing aids act as both speech enhancing and tinnitus treatment devices. These combination devices include options such as fractal tones, white noise, pink noise, notched noise and a variety of other sounds to aid in sound enrichment, provide relief from bothersome tinnitus and encourage the habituation process.

Downloads/Applications: There are many useful APPS that can be used for sound enrichment purposes. They can be downloaded on a smart phone, iPad/tablet device. The Audiologist will teach you how to apply these APPS.

### **Step 3- Fitting and Instruction of Your Devices (Audiologist)**

If devices were ordered during your second visit, your hearing aids or combination devices will be programmed and delivered on this third visit. You will be taught how to use and care for your device(s).

You will also be taught how to manage your devices to reduce the annoyance of your tinnitus. This appointment will last one hour. Payment in full for any device is expected at this appointment.

#### **Step 4-Follow-up Care: (Audiologist)**

At this appointment we will discuss your experiences using the treatment device chosen for you. Fine tuning or adjustments may be made. You will be asked to complete the THI/TRQ questionnaires again so that "outcome measurements" may be obtained to 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 "investigative" 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.**