

MEDICATION & DIET

HOW YOUR MEDICATION OR DIET COULD BE AFFECTING YOUR TINNITUS

Medication

Sometimes the medication you are taking could be either the cause of your tinnitus, or could be making it worse. Some people have a much greater reaction to medication than others. However, it is **very important** to discuss these issues with your doctor before embarking on any change in the medication you have been prescribed.

Salicylates (Aspirin) seems to make tinnitus worse for many people, if taken in large enough doses. If you regularly take these for headaches, try swapping them with a Paracetamol-based pain killer for several weeks to see if there is any change in your tinnitus levels. If you take Aspirin for any other medical condition, however, ask the doctor who prescribed it if there are any suitable alternatives. The low dose Aspirin that many people take to 'thin the blood' rarely causes problems. Salicylates can also be present in some food products, and the following diet section gives more information on this.

Antimalarials such as Quinine have the potential to effect your tinnitus, and so if planning a trip to a malarial area you should work with your doctor to decide on what type of antimalarial is best for you. Quinine can also be present in some drinks, particularly tonic water, so try to substitute it with drinks not containing quinine to ascertain if this is a factor making your tinnitus more intense than it could be.

Some antibiotics are known to be

damaging to our hearing system, but are usually prescribed only when other suitable drugs are not suitable. Other antibiotics only effect the hearing system in those people who are unusually sensitive to them. It is wise to consult your doctor before using any form of ear drops, as several can have the potential to make your tinnitus and hearing loss worse.

People do differ in their response to the same weight-corrected dose of any given medication, and so your doctor might recommend a shorter trial period if appropriate, or alternatives explored instead.

There are numerous other medications that can possibly make your tinnitus worse, so whenever a new medication is prescribed it is important to ask your doctor whether it is likely to effect your tinnitus. Even if he/she is unaware of such side effects, it is now a very quick and simple process for your doctor to find this information.

Alcohol

Like medications, there is a variation in how each person responds to alcohol. Some people find that drinking alcohol makes their tinnitus worse, while others seem to find some relief while drinking. The next day, however, the excessive drinkers nearly always have an increase in their tinnitus levels. Coping with a post-alcohol hangover and tinnitus is no fun!

Research has found that excessive

alcohol can have detrimental effects on overall health. This is when men have more than four standard drinks per day, or women have more than two standard drinks. Certainly your overall level of health can strongly effect your tinnitus, so it follows that it is a wise idea to moderate your alcohol consumption.

Smoking

Smoking too is extremely bad for your health, and thus for your ability to manage your tinnitus. With smoking becoming increasingly expensive and unpopular, perhaps this could be the final compelling reason to give it up!

Diet

Like alcohol and smoking, your diet can have a big effect on your overall health, and your subsequent ability to manage your tinnitus. Switching to a well balanced diet can also do wonders for your sense of well-being, and for preventing many illnesses.

As well as disturbing your sleep and reducing your ability to effectively relax, there is evidence that caffeine can directly make your tinnitus more disturbing. Caffeine can be found in coffee, tea, soft drinks and many chocolates. Cutting down to less than three cups of tea or two of coffee per day is highly recommended. Replacing them with decaffeinated versions, herbal tea, fruit juices or water is even better.

Some people have also found that 'diet' soft drinks with artificial sweeteners make their tinnitus a lot worse. Thus, if you have these types of

drink, why not try substituting them with fruit juices for a few weeks, and see if this makes a difference.

There have been many different reports of specific foodstuffs effecting tinnitus, but these can be difficult to confidently identify and isolate. If it is no problem to avoid your suspected tinnitus triggers, perhaps there is no harm in this. Apart from reducing caffeine intake, other changes to diet only rarely have a direct impact on your tinnitus. Thus for those who are not sensitive to salicy-

“Certainly your overall level of health can strongly effect your tinnitus”

lates, worrying excessively about your use of them might be counterproductive.

Those people who do find that their tinnitus is made significantly worse by Aspirin sometimes find that a salicylate-reduced diet lowers the intensity of their tinnitus. These diets can be complex to plan, so it is best to first consult a dietician.

As you can see, there are many things that you can do to reduce lifestyle effects on your tinnitus. You may have noticed that virtually all of these are commonsense tips that can impact on your general health, and thus are wise practices to adopt for your whole body's sake!

For more information contact your audiologist:

PLEASE Contact your Doctor before changing your medication