Tinnitus (Noise in the Ears)

Sounds you hear in your ears and coming from within the ear is called *tinnitus*. This can be a symptom of many ear disorders. It is often associated with hearing loss.
Tinnitus can be seen with:

- Infections.
- Ear blockages such as wax buildup.
- Meniere's disease.
- Ear damage.
- Inherited.
- Occupational causes.

While irritating, it is not usually a threat to health. When the cause of the tinnitus is wax, infection in the middle ear, or foreign body it is easily treated. Hearing loss will usually be reversible.

TREATMENT

When treating the underlying cause does not get rid of tinnitus, it may be necessary to get rid of the unwanted sound by covering it up with more pleasant background noises. This may include music, the radio etc. There are tinnitus maskers which can be worn which produce background noise to cover up the tinnitus.

Avoid all medications which tend to make tinnitus worse such as alcohol, caffeine, aspirin, and nicotine. There are many soothing background tapes such as rain, ocean, thunderstorms, etc. These soothing sounds help with sleeping or resting.

Keep all follow-up appointments and referrals. This is important to identify the cause of the problem. It also helps avoid complications, impaired hearing, disability, or chronic pain.

Document Released: 12/18/2006 Document Re-Released: 06/30/2008
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.