

Tinnitus Stepped-Care

Patient complains of tinnitus to any provider



Step 1

Triage patient for assessment and diagnosis

- Depending on symptoms, refer to:
 - Otolaryngology
 - Mental health
 - Emergency care
 - Audiology (default referral)



Step 2

Audiology Services

- All patients complete:
 - Medical history
 - Hearing evaluation
 - Screening for a sound hypersensitivity disorder
 - Assessment of tinnitus-specific complaints
- Hearing aid assessment and fitting (if indicated)
- Additional measures if needed for a Step 4 method of counseling
- If Step 3 is scheduled, patient first completes a tinnitus questionnaire (baseline outcome measure)

} Refer out if indicated by findings



Step 3

Tinnitus Education

- Patient learns:
 - Pertinent details about tinnitus
 - How and why tinnitus can be a problem
 - Different methods of evidence-based counseling (Step 4)
- Following education, patient completes outcome measures (tinnitus questionnaire and global-perception-of-change questions)
- Patient decides if tinnitus counseling (Step 4) is desired



Step 4

Tinnitus Counseling using an evidence-based method

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) or Third Wave CBT
- Tinnitus Retraining Therapy (TRT)
- Tinnitus Activities Treatment (TAT)
- Progressive Tinnitus Management (PTM)
- Other (e.g., Mindfulness; Acceptance & Commitment Therapy)
- Following counseling, patient repeats outcome measures
- If counseling is inadequate, Step 5 is recommended



Step 5

Comprehensive Assessment by tinnitus specialists

- Audiologist
- Psychologist
- Other specialist
- Patient decides if further treatment is desired; if so, a treatment plan (Step 6) is made



Step 6

Expanded Treatment

- Any of the evidence-based counseling methods in Step 4
- Complementary and alternative methods (e.g., acupuncture)
- Commercial devices (e.g., bimodal stimulation)
- Experimental methods (strongly considering risk versus benefit)
- Following treatment, patient repeats outcome measures