

## Ringling in the ear “The little guy or gal in the ear”

*Tinnitus, this unpleasant noise in the ear, considerably reduces the quality of life of the person concerned. In Ayurveda, it is assumed that Vata dosha, the air-ether element, is disturbed. In order to restore the balance within the body, food is adjusted and more calmness is integrated into daily life.*

According to the Ayurvedic doctrine the ear as sensory organ is related to ether element, the room that enables hearing. The room and the element ether unify in Vata dosha, the principle of movement. The sound touches the membranes of the ear, brings them to vibrate and over the various sensitive cells is transformed into electric signals. These are in turn sent from the nerves of the auditory pathway to the auditory centers of the brain and understood, as the source of the sound is familiar because of the life experiences collected.

Tinnitus is a warning signal for the concerned person – the message is: deceleration

Suddenly it is there: the permanent noise that accompanies the person concerned from this moment during day and night, a whirring, whistling or deep buzzing sound, the source of which may not be found or understood by the brain. This unpleasant ringing in the ear may neither be drowned nor switched off. Some of the suffering persons manage to integrate this noise. Others, however, experience it as a severe impairment of their quality of life. Why it occurs is asked in medicine not only today.

### Ringling in the ears

The symptoms of the ear noise, called tinnitus today, was called in former times as ringling in the ears. Some of the ancient cultures saw it as a **punishment from God**, others, however, as the **voice of God**, that reveals through the concerned person. Through the improvement in medicine and the understanding of the human body and its anatomy a physical apprehension for this disease emerged.

It is important that whoever perceives a noise in the ear should first of all stay calm and consult a doctor for diagnosis the next day at the latest, in order to preclude an idiopathic sudden sensorineural hearing loss.

When the noise in the ear continues up to three months it is called an **acute tinnitus**. When the noise lasts longer than three months it called a **chronic tinnitus**.

Ayurvedic medicine tries to localize the cause of tinnitus through a thorough medical examination and clarifies eventual physical reasons. Was the tinnitus caused by a sudden loss of hearing, an inflammation, an infection or a Meniere’s disease? Problems in the cervical or jaw area can also be triggers and amplifiers of the complaints, and also disturbances in the area of the middle ear such as earwax plugs, foreign bodies, perforated eardrum, tubes otitis media. Furthermore, these symptoms may be caused by disturbances in the inner ear such as an acoustic trauma (disco, walkman, driving with open-top), through inner ear toxic medicine or through a sudden loss of hearing, hypertension, age related deafness or hardening of the ear canal (otosclerosis).

### Stress as a factor

Stress has to be mentioned as an important factor. Overload and burnout are the most striking triggers when no physical causes can be found. Tinnitus is the warning signal for the respective

## Tinnitus treatment in Ayurveda

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person, that he/she reached his/her limits. The demand is to decelerate life.

An experienced Ayurvedic doctor or health practitioner who defines the constitutional type and diagnoses disease and imbalance of the doshas is the basis for a successful treatment. The three most important factors in Ayurveda are the doshas Vata, Pitta and Kapha. These functional principles communicate between body and mind and control all physiological processes in the body. They form the individual personality, the constitution, Prakriti. The goal of an Ayurveda treatment is **to rebalance the doshas** according to the individual constitution.

Ayurveda works with the opposing principle in order to restore the balance in the body. Where velocity prevails, calmness will be balancing, where heaviness and dullness dominate, dynamics will have an energizing and invigorating effect, coldness is balanced with warmth, dryness with humidity.

In a low frequency signal noise (Karnanda) a Vata imbalance is supposed, in a high frequency whistling (Karnaksveda), however, a Vata disturbance is assumed in combination with a Pitta or Kapha disturbance. According to the respective diagnosis, the doshas will be balanced through a purifying therapy mainly soothing Vata dosha as Vata is located in the ear and in the auditory sense.

Bioenergy Vata created from the elements ether and air embodies the kinetic principle of movement. Vata dosha is associated with qualities such as dry, light, cold, moving, clear and rough. Most of the Vata related symptoms refer to the nervous system, psyche and the musculoskeletal system. For this reason calming the Vata dosha and stabilizing the nervous system have priority. The resulting therapies have an opposite effect on those qualities, i.e., warming, moisturizing, soothing, regularity.

Yoga and meditation calm the entire organism

## Food in a therapy

Food is one of the most important therapeutic measures - **you are what you eat**. Often a minimal change in diet can set up reserves or serve to calm Vata bioenergy. Health and nutrition therapists support the therapeutic treatment. Depending on the imbalance of the doshas the bioenergies Pitta and Kapha have to be considered in therapy as well. Meals should be prepared fresh, be moist, warm and easy to digest so that Agni, the digestive fire, is stabilized. Raw food should be eaten in small quantities and only for lunch after the warm meal.

When eating animal protein ensure that easily digestible protein is given preference. Warm drinks (for example, ginger water) should cover the fluid requirements sufficiently. Be careful with spicy and acidic food. Coffee, alcohol and nicotine should be reduced to a minimum - even better is to avoid them.

## Cultivate regularity

As Vata dosha is considered to be extremely variable, it is important **to eat and drink regularly** and to care for a regular daily routine with strengthening and relaxing times of rest. Meditation and relaxation techniques and spending time in the open countryside should be included in daily routine. In any case, avoid stress in family life and job. Manual therapy helps to stimulate metabolism and to purify the blocked vessels. Soothing measures support the therapy and alleviate the symptoms. Among the most effective therapies there are:

**Nasya:** treatment where powder, medicated oils or medicated ghee is inhaled

## **Tinnitus treatment in Ayurveda**

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**Karna-Purana:** constant oil applications in the area of the external auditory canal

**Shirodhara:** medicated oil is poured on the forehead in a special way

**Shiroabhyanga:** Ayurvedic head massage

In Ayurveda chronic tinnitus is considered a disease that is not easy to treat. In the center of the therapeutic approach is the person with his individual constitution and imbalanced bio-energies. An acute tinnitus can disappear by itself. It is important to start treatment immediately. This increases the healing chances by 20 percent.

### **The unknown frightens**

The noise of a tinnitus cannot be associated with an external source of sound. Where does this tone come from? It is the unknown that may frighten the patient. An explanation about the phenomenon of tinnitus may help to lose the fear of the phantom tone. The more it is possible to integrate the tone into life, the more it loses its intensity, as concentration on the noise is different then.

There are different methods and possibilities to arrange with the "little guy or gal in the ear" i.e., ringing in the ear. Some patients find it helpful to give it a name, to talk with it and see it as a personal constituent or "co-resident". What does this whistling, buzzing or signal noise want to tell me? Am I up to my ears with work? Is it time to say stop? What do I or do I not want to hear any more? Relaxation techniques, breath and sound therapy, yoga and meditation calm the nervous system and the entire organism.

**.....to be continued**

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