

**CALIFORNIA  
EAR  
INSTITUTE**

*Hear For Your  
Future!*



HEARING DEVICE CENTER

HEADQUARTERS

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# WE'RE ALL EARS!

HEARING DEVICE CENTER EDITION



LET THEM HEAR FOUNDATION



MEDICAL/SURGICAL SERVICES



AUDIOLOGY



CALIFORNIA EAR INSTITUTE



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## My Ears Are Ringing

My Ears are ringing! What is it?  
Can you make it go away?

Tinnitus, often described as a ringing or buzzing sound in the ear, is a symptom that can be related to almost every known hearing problem. Tinnitus is not a disease, but it can be caused by exposure to loud sounds, middle or inner ear infections, tumors on the hearing nerve, and even wax on the eardrum.

Sometimes tinnitus can be medically or surgically treated. Your appointment with a physician at CEI is your opportunity to find out about treatment options for you. It is not always possible for your physician to determine the cause of your tinnitus; each case is different. The same cause will not necessarily produce the same set of symptoms in each patient.

Tinnitus is a common problem, affecting about 17% of the general population and causing significant suffering in many cases. Many patients have learned to live with this problem but for some, living with it is very problematic. For those patients the CEI Hearing Device Center offers some help.

### Hearing Devices

We know that if a person has tinnitus and also has a hearing loss, they may derive considerable relief from the tinnitus when they are using their hearing device. In many cases the relief is dramatic and complete. For some the relief may be a reduced perception of the ringing.

### Tinnitus Maskers and Sound Generators

Masking devices resemble hearing devices and are designed to produce low-level sound that can reduce and in some cases eliminate the perception of tinnitus. Masking can also produce the phenomenon of residual inhibition, where the reduction or elimination of tinnitus perception continues for a short time after the masker is removed. Sound generators are like maskers in that they produce an audible white-noise-type sound that mixes with but does not overcome the perceived tinnitus. Sound generators are worn in each ear (even if one ear has more tinnitus). The goal is to "turn down" the brain's response to the tinnitus through a period of habituation to the sound generators.

### Tinnitus Retraining Therapy

Tinnitus retraining therapy (TRT) combines low-level steady background sounds through sound generators with one-on-one patient/clinician directive counseling. The patient enriches his or her background sound

environment for a minimum of eight hours a day usually with in the ear sound generators. This combination of therapies helps people habituate (essentially grow unaware of) the sound of their tinnitus. Tinnitus Retraining Therapy can take 12-24 months before a patient no longer needs the in the ear sound generators. The goal of TRT is to have the patient no longer aware of their tinnitus (habituation) except when they focus their attention on it, and even then the tinnitus is not annoying or bothersome.

California Ear Institute is committed to providing the best relief possible for our tinnitus patients. Toward that end we participate in various research projects using patients that have tinnitus with the goal of relieving the annoyance using cutting edge methods and products. If you would like to be included in tinnitus research or would like to find out about ongoing research in this area please call our main desk at 650 494 1000 (Palo Alto) or (925) 830 9116

## ALLERGY CLINIC OPENS AT CEI

**Beginning the week of October 3rd, the California Ear Institute will begin offering Skin Allergy Evaluation and Treatment services. CEI-Allergy provides the latest techniques recommended by the American Academy of Otolaryngologic Allergy including M.Q.T. testing. To learn more or to make an appointment with Dr. Dear, please call (650) 494-1000.**

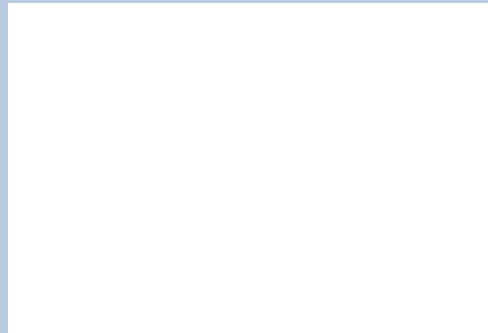
**COMING SOON . . .**

**ON DECEMBER 3RD, THE HEARING DEVICE CENTER-SAN RAMON PLANS TO PARTNER WITH TECHNOLOGY- LEADING OTICON TO PROVIDE PATIENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH A SEMINAR ON CURRENT HEARING AID TECHNOLOGY. WHETHER YOU'VE HAD YOUR HEARING AID(S) FOR 2 YEARS OR 5 YEARS YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND. CALL COLLEEN AT (925) 807-1140 TO SIGN-UP. MORE DETAILS TO COME.**

CALIFORNIA EAR INSTITUTE

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## Phone Devices for the Hearing Impaired

We take the telephone for granted. It is such a common everyday device. We can talk to people all around the world and keep in touch with friends and family. It is an essential tool in the business world. Without the telephone, everyday life would be very different.

For the hearing impaired, telephone usage presents a special set of problems. The ease and convenience most of us take for granted when using the telephone is a little bit harder to achieve. Fortunately, there are a number of devices and technologies designed to help people with hearing loss easily use the telephone.

### “T” switch

For people wearing a hearing aid, a “T” switch is a convenient and effective way to amplify telephone conversations. Not all hearing aids come with a “T” switch, but they are available on many models and have advantages beyond telephone use.

The “T” stands for telecoil. Telecoils pick up electromagnetic signals which are then converted into audio for a clear sound. The signals are generated by a “loop” which is part of the telephone circuitry. Loops can also be used in large areas such as churches and auditoriums. Through the use of a microphone the voice can be transmitted through the loop and received by the telecoil in the hearing aid. When the “T” switch is activated the microphone of the hearing aid is turned off. The end result is that the user hears the desired voice through the “loop”

and none of the background noise. This results in a much clearer sound and greater intelligibility.

Potential problems with telecoil usage are the characteristic “humming” or “buzzing” that the listener hears from the hearing aid as soon as the aid is switched into the “T” program. This magnetic interference is more audible if the listener is near lots of electronics such as florescent lights, computers, microwave ovens, etc. Sometimes the annoying buzz can be reduced through hearing aid adjustment but not always. The buzz is often more of a problem if the listener has good hearing in the bass pitches and not so good hearing in the higher pitches. The bottom line: **make an appointment to see your audiologist at the Hearing Device Center to discuss any telecoil or other programming problems!**

### Amplifiers

For those without a “T” switch on their hearing aid, or for those who do not wear a hearing aid, there are still many options for easing telephone usage. The most basic of these would be a telephone amplifier. This device could be integrated into your home telephone or it could be a portable unit that you can use anywhere. Telephone amplifiers come with a volume control to set the loudness to a suitable level. See us to determine if you qualify for the California State telephone access program!

### Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD)

TDD’s are useful for people with severe or total hearing loss. They allow communication via a telephone connection by typing messages on a keyboard and viewing the response on a screen. They can be used to communicate directly with another TDD, or with a regular voice telephone with a telecommunications relay service using relay operator assistance.

### Text Messages

Computers open up a whole new arena for communication. Many of the popular computer applications like e-mail and messenger services (MSN messenger) are ideal for people with hearing disabilities. Messenger services are similar to TDD devices for instant communication, and can be configured to send messages to a mobile phone in case of an emergency.

Mobile phones, pagers, and beepers are all good ways to quickly contact anyone – either with or without a hearing disability. Their text capabilities make them ideal devices for instant communication. Another device in this category could include the fax machine. Some fax machines can be direct dialled without waiting for the sound of the dial tone – essential for someone with a hearing loss

**The bottom line: no matter your degree of hearing impairment – if you’re not successful with a telephone – ask us to help you. There is a solution!**

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