

Causes of Unilateral Tinnitus

1. Earwax Impaction

Excess earwax, a potential cause of bilateral tinnitus, can also trigger symptoms in just one ear. While earwax protects the ear canal from dirt and bacteria, excessive buildup may become impacted, creating pressure. This pressure on the delicate structures of the inner ear can lead to tinnitus symptoms.



2. Exposure to Loud Noises

Exposure to extreme or prolonged noise is a leading cause of tinnitus, often damaging the delicate mechanisms of the inner ear and causing hearing loss alongside tinnitus. Symptoms in just one ear may result from one-sided exposure to loud noise or uneven damage between the ears.

3. Ear Infection

Sometimes, ear infections only affect one ear. A particularly aggressive infection that goes untreated can cause significant damage to the inner ear, a primary cause of tinnitus symptoms. It is important that you address ear infection symptoms as soon as they start to prevent the possibility of developing unilateral tinnitus.



4. Head Trauma

A significant hit to the head playing sports or a car accident can rattle the inner ear and cause permanent damage. If your unilateral tinnitus began after a hit to the side of the head, that incident may be the cause of your symptoms.

5. Cholesteatoma

A cholesteatoma is a skin growth in the middle ear. It starts out as a buildup of dead skin cells and, over time, develops into a cyst. As a cholesteatoma develops, it can begin to put pressure on the inner ear, causing tinnitus symptoms, balance issues, and hearing loss.



6. Other Medical Conditions

While we listed just a few of these potential causes of unilateral tinnitus above, it is essential to note that it may be a symptom of more serious hearing and brain function issues, such as Meniere's disease, multiple sclerosis, or vascular abnormalities.