

Noise sensitivity (hyperacusis)

Hyperacusis is when everyday sounds seem much louder than they should. Treatment can help. Talk to your GP if you think you have hyperacusis.

Check if you have hyperacusis

You may have hyperacusis if some everyday sounds seem much louder than they should. It can sometimes be painful.

You may be affected by sounds like:

- jingling coins
- a barking dog
- a car engine
- someone chewing
- a vacuum cleaner

Your sensitivity to noise can affect relationships, school or work and your general wellbeing.

Hyperacusis can affect 1 or both ears. It can come on suddenly or develop over time.

Contact your GP if everyday noises seem too loud. They may refer you to a hearing specialist for further tests and treatment.

Treatment for hyperacusis

Hyperacusis can be cured if it's caused by another condition, such as a migraine, head injury or Lyme disease.

If there's no clear cause, you may be offered treatment to help make you less sensitive to everyday sounds.

This could be:

- sound therapy to get you used to everyday sounds again - this may involve wearing earpieces that make white noise
- [cognitive behavioural therapy \(CBT\)](#) to change the way you think about your hyperacusis and reduce anxiety

You can try to ease hyperacusis yourself by doing some [relaxation techniques](#).

Do not use earplugs or earmuffs unless you really need to. You should not avoid noisy situations as this will make you even more sensitive to noise.

Causes of hyperacusis

The cause of hyperacusis is unclear.

It can appear on its own or with other conditions, such as:

- [tinnitus](#)
- a head injury
- Ménière's disease
- Lyme disease
- migraines
- Williams syndrome

Other types of hearing sensitivity

You may have:

- misophonia - if some sounds make you angry
- phonophobia - if some sounds make you anxious
- recruitment - if your ears have trouble adjusting between quiet and loud sounds

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Sláintecare.

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