

Help is out there for Tinnitus sufferers

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For the one in 10 tinnitus sufferers in Wales, life can be overbearing and a daily struggle. But the fact is that many people with tinnitus don't even know they have the condition and because there is no complete cure, they also don't realise that help is out there.

As February 9th marks the start of National Tinnitus Week, leading independent Welsh hearing aid specialist, Hearing Aid Solutions, is offering free advice to sufferers. In recent years the support available to tinnitus sufferers has increased dramatically as technology in audiology has developed.

Clinical audiologist Sarah Foster of Hearing Aid Solutions - which are the only independent tinnitus specialists in Wales, said: "Tinnitus can happen at any age. It's more prevalent in adults but it's not unheard of in children.

"It can happen for many different reasons. It could be physical such as hearing loss, a bump on the head or a trauma but it can also be purely an emotional reaction to a change in circumstance.

"Many of the patients are quite anxious and stressed about their experience and they welcome advice and the reassurance that help is available.

"The symptoms of tinnitus can be described as any internal noise heard within the head or ears when there is no external stimulus. Some people have got this misconception that it's only a ringing noise but it can be a humming, whistling, beeping or squeaking."

After undergoing a quadruple heart bypass, 60 year old Huw Williams started to hear a high pitched noise in his left ear.

Unsure what it was, and hopeful that it would disappear on its own accord, Huw battled to live with the constant noise for six months before he realised that help was out there.

Father of two Huw, who lives in Aberaeron with his wife Barbara, said: "The noise I hear in my head is like a high pitched sound of electric, I can't really explain it but it's there all the time.

"I put it down to something that occurred after my operation and hoped it would go away.

"I'd had it for six months when I talked to someone who told me that it could be tinnitus but they also said that there was nothing you could do about it. I went to see the doctor who confirmed it was tinnitus but even he said there was nothing I could do. I just took everyone by their word until I found out differently."

Huw read an article about hearing tests offered by tinnitus specialists Hearing Aid Solutions in Carmarthen and decided to find out more. The hearing test discovered that Huw had a severe hearing loss in one ear and all it took was a hearing aid to improve his hearing and relieve his condition.

Semi-retired Huw, who runs his own event management business part time, said: "I suppose I realised I had a hearing problem because I needed the television turned up twice as high as anyone else wanted it. The audiologist realised immediately that I was deaf as a doorpost in my left ear and now I have a hearing aid, the noise of the tinnitus reduces but as soon as I take it off, the noise comes back.

"I'm so happy now, it was such a relief. Life is easier altogether - my family don't have to shout as much at me anymore, it's good for work and has even helped me in my role as a rugby coach for the first team in Lampeter, I can hear what's going on now.

"Without the hearing aid, the tinnitus is there 24 hours a day and was so frustrating. I feel sorry for anyone who has tinnitus but doesn't realise what it is and hasn't done anything about it.

"But you can do something about it and that's what I found out. I really would encourage people not to wait, but to go get it seen to straight away."

Hearing Aid Solutions has outlets on King Street, in Carmarthen, and in Fishguard, Lampeter, Llandeilo and Haverfordwest. Clinical audiologists Sarah Foster and Clare Alderman are tinnitus experts and are also registered with the British Tinnitus Association (BTA).

(by tivysideadvertiser.co.uk)