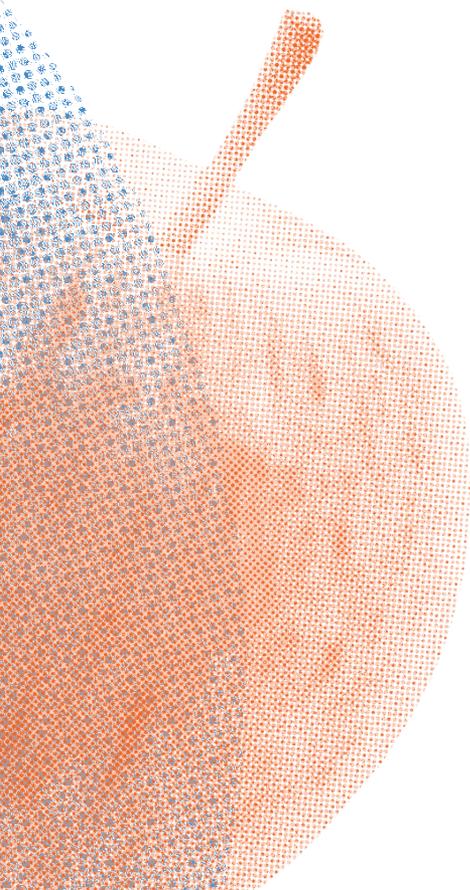




WORLD



Misophonia
Awareness





What is Misophonia?

Misophonia is a mental disorder that triggers the fight-or-flight response when particular sounds are heard. Hearing these sounds can cause an extreme number of emotions, such as anger and anxiety. These sounds are known as triggers, and while some triggers are common, others may vary between each misophonic sufferer. The name misophonia can be broken down into two Greek words: “miso” meaning, hatred, and “phonia,” meaning sound. Thus, the word misophonia translates to the hatred of sound.

Trigger Types

1

Auditory

Includes sounds like chewing, slurping, sniffing, bass, pen-clicking, dogs barking, lawnmowers, opening chip bags, and many more.

2

Visual

Include the sight of a moving jaw, a bouncing leg, the twirling of hair, putting food to or in one's mouth, the drumming of fingers, and more.

3

Olfactory (rare)

The smell of certain scents can trigger an individual. Much like other trigger types these can vary as well.

4

Vibration (rare)

Vibrations from things like bass, bumping desks, the kicking of a chair, or even heavy footsteps can also be a trigger.

5

Tactile (rare)

Could be triggered by the feeling of touching a keyboard or certain fabrics.



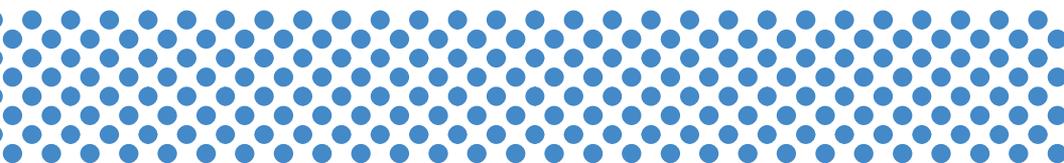


Development

Researchers have discovered that the misophonia starts in childhood and worsens with age. Over time, the amount of triggers and how badly one reacts to them grows. It is not uncommon for a misophonic individual to develop a new trigger noise even after they have already been exposed to the sound before. For example, at one point in time an individual may not be bothered by the sound of someone clicking a pen, but at a different point in time the pen clicking becomes unbearable. It is believed that a new trigger can be developed at any point in one's life. Some researchers suggest that new triggers develop when the misophonic individual is already reacting to a different trigger, thus creating an endless chain of trigger noises. This is why the sounds deemed to be bothersome vary from person to person. However, there are common noises that the majority of misophonic suffers share. The most common noise irritant is the sounds of people eating.

It is important to note that misophonia is considered a primary condition. This means that the condition does not form in conjunction with another condition. Because misophonia is a disorder than results in sound sensitivities, it is a common misconception that it's product of another, bigger disorder. But, in fact, those who have misophonia may show no signs of another other pre-existing conditions at all.

Recently, the common DNA genetic testing and analysis company, 23andMe, has been able to identify a genetic marker what can be associated with misophonia. They state that the marker is near the TENM2 gene, which helps in the development of the brain. In their survey of over 80,000 costumers who are of European descent, 20% of them said they were enraged by the sound of others chewing.



Reactions

Just like how the trigger sounds differ from person to person, so does the reaction. Some individuals have a difference in severity with regard to how particular sound will bother them. So naturally, how bad a person reacts depends on how badly a noise will bother them. The most common reactions are emotional stress. These emotions can vary, but they include:



ANGER



DISGUST



FEAR



ANXIETY

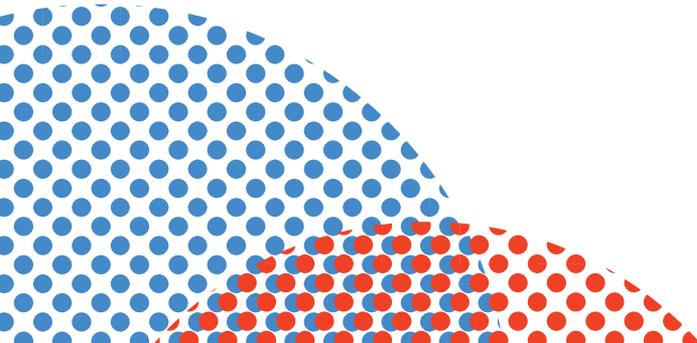


PANIC



DEPRESSION

Because the brain is triggering the fight-or-flight response, the misophonic individual will be consumed with the urge to flee the area in which the sound can be heard, or they will have a strong desire to make the sound stop completely. Not only does the sufferer experience emotional stress, but they can experience physical stress as well. There has also been records of people experiencing physical reactions such as pressure in their chest, increased heart rate, increased body temperature, rising blood pressure, and the tightening of muscles.





Inside the Brain



By this time, you may be asking yourself why this happens. Unfortunately, researchers still aren't 100% sure, but they have a pretty good idea. MRI studies have shown increased responses in the anterior insular cortex (AIC), which is the portion of the brain that processes emotions. It was also discovered that there was a greater connectivity between the AIC and the default mode network (DMN), the area of the brain in charge of memories and associations. Upon further investigation it was discovered that those who have misophonia have a higher myelination

within the brain than average person. This contributes to the exaggeration of activities within the brain's auditory and limbic systems. This hyper-connectivity suggests that there are more neurons in these areas of the brain that are contributing to the heightened activity. Having the activity heightened in these areas of the brain causes the misophonic person to perceive their environments at a higher threat level than what it really is. Their brains are misunderstanding the noise as a threat to the individual's safety.



Because misophonia has similarities to other conditions with noise sensitivities, researchers have found that there are a few other disorders that can correspond with misophonia, but they don't always have to be present. These disorders include:

Synesthesia

Hyperacusis

Autism

OCD

Tinnitus

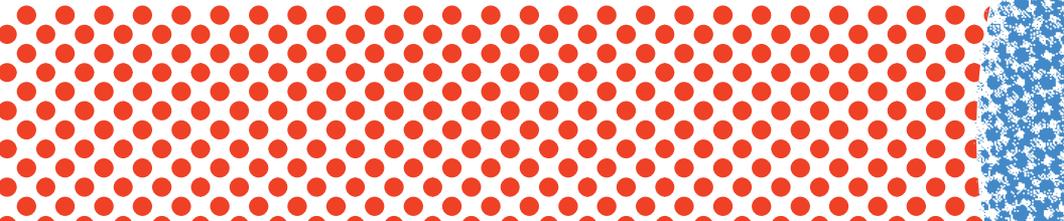
Phonophobia



Diagnosis

Getting an official diagnosis for any condition can be challenging. With misophonia, it can be even more daunting because the condition is not listed in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). The DSM-5 is the official classification list for mental health disorders recognized in the United States. This means that a person cannot technically be diagnosed with the condition. Even if a person is able to obtain an official diagnosis, it would require their medical physician to have a detailed case history on the different triggers a person may have, as well as the reactions they have with said triggers. So, in order for people to get the help they need, the Misophonia Network developed the Misophonia Provider Network. The Network provides a list of medical professionals that acknowledge and specialize in misophonia. The different professions include audiologists, psychiatrists, and medical doctors.

As getting an official diagnosis can be difficult to obtain, many have to find ways to help themselves deal with these everyday irritants, which is referred to as coping strategies. Others require the help from medical professionals. Some of these coping strategies include mimicking the triggers sound to cancel it out, wearing headphones, wearing hearing plugs/aids, taking antidepressants, or participating in cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and exposure therapy.





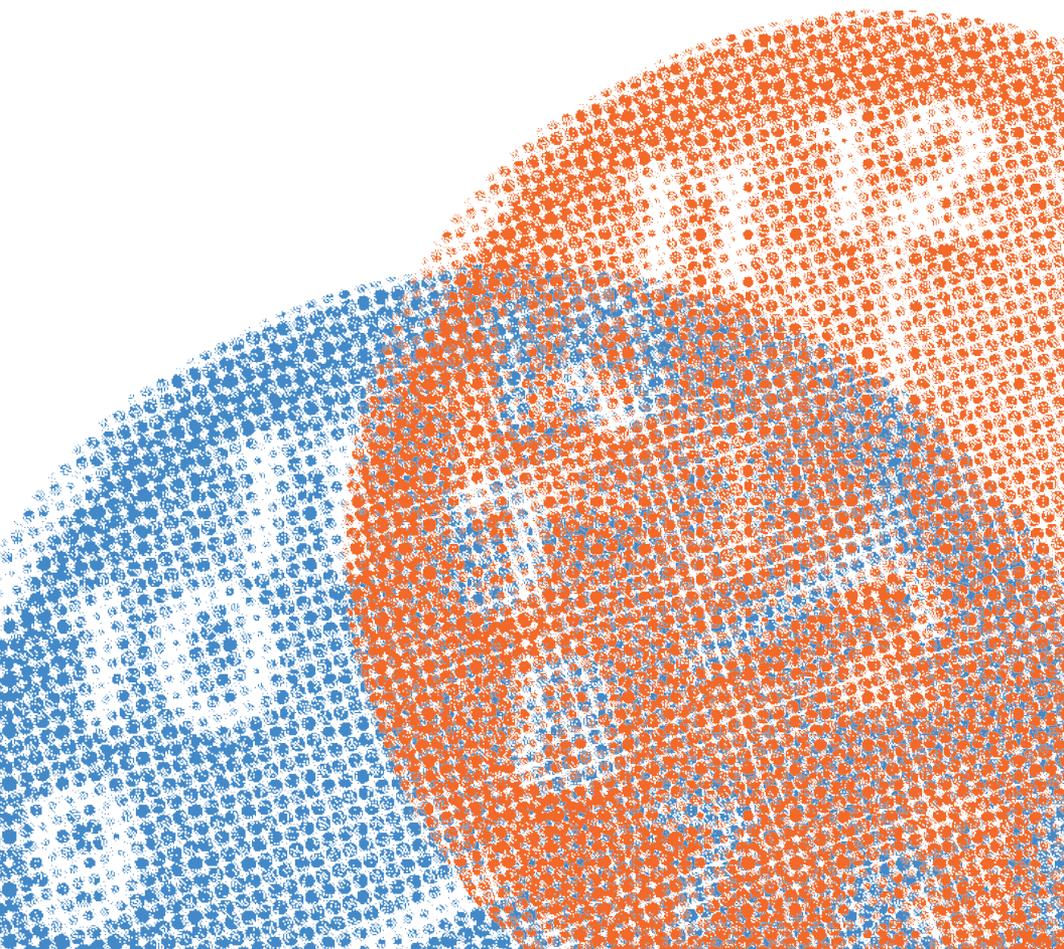
Where to find help

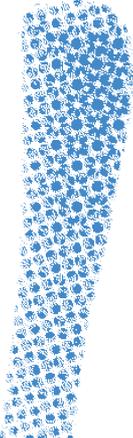
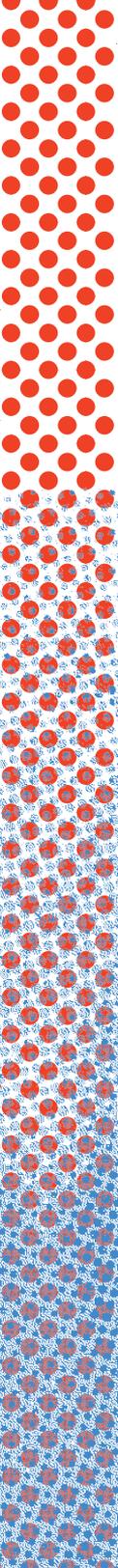
www.misophoniaproviders.com

By visiting this website, you can find a list medical professionals that are willing to help those with misophonia.

www.misophoniaawareness.org

If you would like to join the cause, this is the perfect place to start. Here, you can help either yourself or others take back control of their lives. By engaging in awareness campaigns, you will help to encourage more research into the condition and raise more awareness of the condition.





References

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5808324/>

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/320682.php>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6034066/>

<https://www.spdstar.org/basic/misophonia>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4547634/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6034066/>

<https://www.livescience.com/65669-what-is-misophonia.html>

