

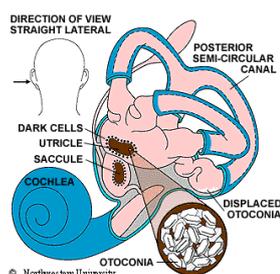
Vertigo and Treatment

By: Linda Johnston, PT

Vertigo, not to be confused with light headedness, is a type of dizziness, where there is a feeling of motion when one is stationary. It is often associated with nausea and vomiting as well as difficulties standing or walking. Recurrent episodes in those with vertigo are common and they frequently impair the quality of life.

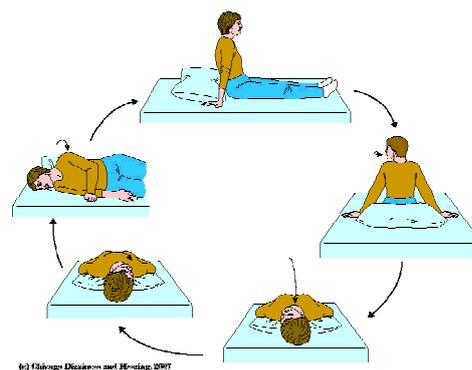
The most common causes of vertigo are benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), concussion, and vestibular migraine while less common causes include Ménière's Disease and vestibular neuritis. Excessive consumption of ethanol (alcoholic beverages) can also cause notorious symptoms of vertigo.

Vertigo occurs when there is conflict between the signals sent to the brain by various balance and position-sensing systems of the body. Your brain uses input from four sensory systems; vision, sensory nerve or proprioception, skin pressure, and the inner ear, to maintain your sense of balance and orientation to your surroundings.



Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), the most common vestibular disorder, is brief periods of vertigo triggered by a change in the position of the person's head relative to gravity. It is caused by small crystalline particles (otoconia) in the inner ear dislodging and settling in the semi-circular canals and changing the dynamics of the position-sensing mechanism, indicating motion, and vertigo may occur. It is rarely serious, and can be effectively treated with repositioning movements.

BPPV is diagnosed using the Dix-Halpike maneuver which can also identify the effected ear. It is then treated with a particle repositioning maneuver, such as the Epley maneuver, performed by a doctor or physical therapist. The home Epley Maneuver can be effective, takes approximately 2-3 minutes, and is repeated every 24 hours until the person is vertigo free. In my experience, BPPV is resolved with only one treatment in 80% of those receiving this procedure. For the remaining 20%, a second time may be all that is needed to get back to a normal life. Occasionally, a home exercise program of eye tracking exercises may be needed, as well.



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