



Newsletter

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Publisher

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April / May 2013

**Educated - Safe - Effective
Spine Care**

Many patients consider this newsletter as a reminder to come in for their monthly good spinal health check up. Now is a good time to book your "tune up" appointment.

Clinic Hours

Mon 10am - 7pm
Tues 9 am - 12pm
Wed 10am - 6pm
Thurs 3pm - 7pm
Fri 9am - 4pm
Sat 9:30 am - 12:30pm

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Vertigo

Vertigo is the illusion of a spinning or rotational movement. This sensation is similar to the feeling that follows doing rapid pirouettes, getting off a rotating chair or a merry-go-round. You can feel as if the environment is spinning around you or that the spinning movement or rotation is within your head. **It is normal to experience vertigo when you get off a merry-go-round but it is not normal to experience vertigo when you look up or rotate your head and neck to look behind you or when you roll over in bed.**

Vertigo maybe associated with other symptoms as dizziness, light-headedness, nausea, vomiting and sweating. While vertigo may be incapacitating and result in lost productivity and quality of life it is generally treatable and rarely the sign of a life-threatening or serious disorder.

There are many causes of vertigo and dizziness but all vertigo reflects dysfunction of the extremely complex vestibular system. The majority of vertigo stems from the ear, neck or sinuses. Rarely, vertigo is due to a stroke or brain tumor. Most will suffer a singular cause of vertigo and a few will suffer from a combination of two or more co-existing conditions.

The duration of each episode of vertigo is a clue to its cause. If the vertigo lasts less than a minute it is likely due to an inner ear condition Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV), also called Benign Vertigo or Positional Vertigo. If it last for minutes it could be due to a transient ischemic attack. If it last minutes to hours it could be due to migraine (even without the headache) or Meniere syndrome, an autoimmune disease. If it lasts for more than 24 hours it may be due to a self limiting condition called vestibular neuronitis or labyrinthitis. This condition usually resolves without medical intervention in a few days. Vertigo from a stroke or a brain tumor are constant and will not spontaneously resolve in a few days.

Fortunately, short durations of vertigo are far more common. As a rule of thumb, the shorter the duration of the episodes of vertigo the less severe or sinister the cause.

The most common cause of brief severe episodes of vertigo and dizziness is an inner ear condition called, Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV).

In BPPV the symptoms usually start suddenly and often when waking from sleep. Episodes are triggered by changes in the position of the head e.g. getting out of bed or turning over in bed, tipping your head back to look up and certain Yoga or Pilates positions such as the 'down dog'.

The term BPPV means: **Benign** – a non-progressive non-fatal condition; **Paroxysmal** – sudden and unpredictable in onset; **Positional** – episodes are caused by a change in head position; **Vertigo** - a sense of dizziness or spinning.

What are the causes of BPPV?

The inner ear, labyrinth, contains fluid in semicircular canals (figure 1). The canals are lined with sensitive hair cell nerves (figure 2). Movement of fluid against the hair cell nerve endings, allows the brain to sense movement and maintain balance. Calcium carbonate crystals, known as otoconia, can form and float in the inner ear fluid. If these crystals strike or get stuck to the sensitive motion detecting nerve endings the brain perceives a continuation of motion when the actual movement of the head has stopped.

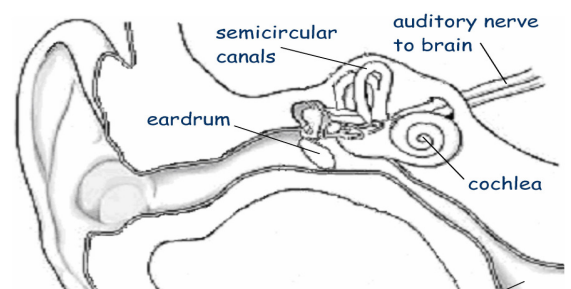


Figure 1

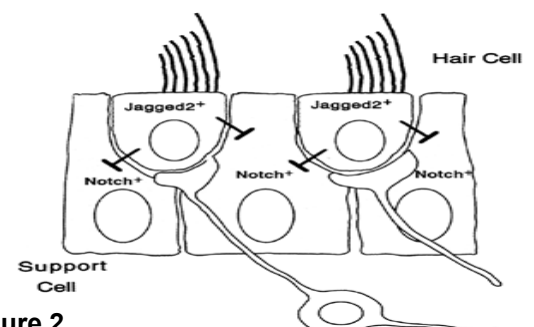


Figure 2



Are you happy with your health fund?

Some Funds do not rebate appropriately for chiropractic care or the products we prescribe. BUPA, for example, does not provide a rebate for custom made orthotics when they are prescribed by chiropractors while Medibank Private does. If you are not sure you are getting the most out of your health insurance it may be in your best interest to get some independent help and review your health insurance policy. **Choose Well Health Insurance Advisors** are dedicated to helping people Choose the most appropriate health insurance so that they can maximize the benefits from the services they need and spend less money on premiums. They specialize in health insurance and nothing else. Their service is absolutely free and they have a best price guarantee. They can be contacted on **1300 42 11 54** or www.choosewell.com.au . **Quote ID# 3749** and let them know I recommended them.

Do you sit for too long?

Prolonged sitting without a break alters the shape and function of your body leading to poor health and back pain. If you forget to take regular breaks from sitting to move and stretch you can download the **Sit Right** widget for free from the Chiropractors Association Australia to remind you to take regular breaks.

www.chiropractors.asn.au/SitRightApp

During your breaks it is good to stand and to stretch your spine and arms backwards or go for a walk.



Newsletters

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This inner ear condition often begins after: a head or whiplash injury, a severe cold or virus, the ageing process, minor strokes and persistent use of ototoxic medications as some antibiotics.

About 20% of all cases of vertigo and dizziness are due to BPPV. The older we get the more common it becomes. In the over 50's age group BPPV accounts for 50% of reported vertigo and dizziness.

The most common cause of vertigo in the under 50's age group is head trauma and whiplash. In the over 50's age group degeneration of the vestibular system of the inner ear is the most common cause of vertigo. In half of all cases, BPPV is called "idiopathic," which means it occurs for no known reason.

Diagnosis of BPPV

Chiropractors are able to diagnosis this condition after taking a full case history and performing a physical and neurological examination. Specific tests, such as the Dix-Hallpike test or the Nylen-Barany test are used to establish a diagnosis, figure 3.

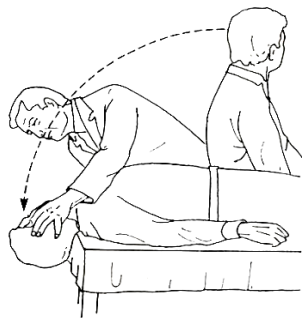


Figure 3

In this test the patients head/neck is rotated to one side and extended while they are in the seated position. Next they are quickly laid on to their back with their head hanging over the edge of the examining table. The test confirms they have BPPV if their vertigo is reproduced. The test is repeated with the head rotated and extended to the other side. Typically the symptoms are reproduced the with the head rotated to only one side.

The appropriate treatment for vertigo obviously depends on the cause. **If head / neck trauma caused the condition the symptoms will not clear until the neck has been appropriately treated.** Chiropractors are famous for

successfully treating trauma and movement related disorders of the neck including vertigo.

If the small calcium carbonate crystals are sticking to the sensitive hair cells in the inner ear they must be relocated to a place where they will no longer cause the symptoms. These crystals can be relocated by a repositioning manoeuvre called the Epley Manoeuvre.

The Epley Maneuvre is a simple and well tolerated technique that some studies suggest has a 80% success rate with the first attempt and up to a 95% success rate after 3 treatments. The intent of the manoeuvre is to use gravity to move the calcium carbonate crystals away from the nerve endings into an area of the inner ear where they will cause no further symptoms. Youtube videos aptly review this manoeuvre. This treatment is very effective, however, the symptoms can recur. Research shows a relatively low recurrence rate of about 15 percent per year. Many chiropractors are trained to perform the Epley Maneuver.

In the manoeuvre the chiropractor will move you into the specific position, as determined by the Dix-Hallpike test, that reproduced your symptoms in order to dislodge the crystal from its inappropriate resting position. Then they will slowly move your head and body in a way as to prevent the crystal from resting on the sensitive nerve endings of the inner ear. This may be followed by home exercises, so called Vestibular rehabilitation exercises.

From a medical perspective, BPPV is treated symptomatically with drugs, such as Stemetil.

Chiropractic treatment might not be the first thing you think of if you have vertigo or dizziness. The manoeuvres used by chiropractors to relocate the crystals in the inner ear are the same as the ones used by medical clinicians who specialize in these conditions.

Vertigo due to BPPV responds well to conservative chiropractic care because we can treat the neck and the ear. Nevertheless chiropractic care is not suited for all types of vertigo or dizziness. If we can't help you we will refer you back to your GP for further diagnostic testing and medical care.