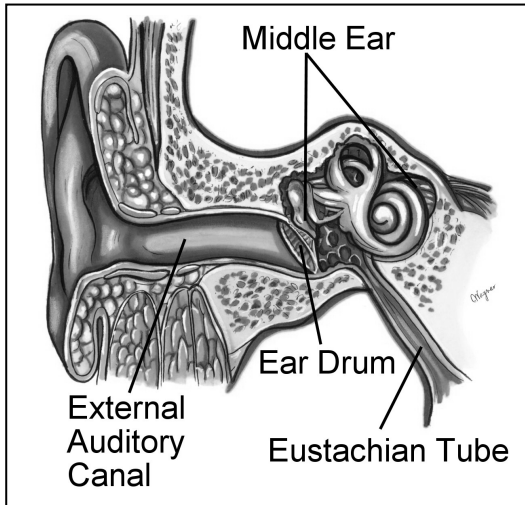


Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV)



Vertigo is a feeling that you are unsteady or that you or your surroundings are moving. Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) is the most common form of vertigo. BPPV is characterized by brief episodes (lasting up to 1 minute) of intense vertigo especially when you move your head in a particular direction (eg when rolling over in bed or standing up from bed). Benign means it does not have a serious cause. Nevertheless, it is troublesome but usually not serious and can usually be effectively treated.

The middle ear has two components involved with balance- semicircular canals that detect movement and otolith organs that detect the current head position in space. The otolith organs normally have crystals that normally help with balance. In BPPV these crystals become dislodged (canaliths) and move into the semicircular canals – the body perceives this as motion. Crystals may be dislodged by a viral infection or head injury but often no cause is found. It is more common as we grow older.

TESTS AND DIAGNOSIS

Your doctor can usually confirm the diagnosis by observing involuntary movements of your eyes (nystagmus) and dizziness when you are suddenly laid down in a particular direction. Usually the ear that is downwards when you feel dizzy has the problem with displaced crystals. A hearing test (audiogram) and MRI scan may be required to exclude a more serious cause for your dizziness (such as a benign brain tumor or vestibular schwannoma). Occasionally, more involved tests of balance are required if your dizziness is not responding to treatment.

TREATMENT

Dr Iseli will perform canalith repositioning maneuvers to correct the cause of your dizziness. These are simple, slow movements of your head which aim to remove the crystals from the semicircular canals back into the otolith organs (where they belong).

AFTERWARDS

It is normal to feel slightly unsteady for up to 24 hours after treatment. You should avoid lying flat or dropping your head below your shoulders for 5 days after your last dizzy episode. You should sleep on an extra pillow for 5 days. This will give the crystals time to settle in the correct place. Avoid driving when you feel dizzy or unsteady. You may need to use repositioning maneuvers yourself at home if symptoms recur. With repetition, these maneuvers are 90-95% effective.

If you have ongoing symptoms after 5 days you should try performing Brandt Daroff exercises at home (see below).

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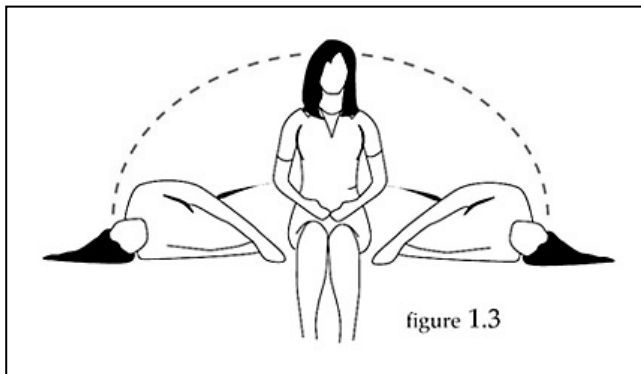
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Brandt Daroff exercises



Modified Brandt Daroff exercises may help with ongoing dizziness if previous maneuvers have been unhelpful or the problem keeps recurring.

The exercise should be performed 5x per side, twice per day for 1 month or until symptoms resolve.

STEPS:

1. Sit on the couch or bed with feet flat on the floor.
2. Turn your head to one side (eg left)
3. Move quickly from the sitting to the lying position onto the side opposite your head turn (eg right) so that you are looking up at the ceiling. Ideally, move towards the side that makes you dizzy first.
4. If you become dizzy stay still until it passes and for an additional 5 seconds.
5. Slowly return to sit upright and stay still until dizziness settles and add 5 seconds.
6. Turn your head to the opposite side and lie down on your other side.
7. Repeat steps 1-6 five times.

NEW ATTACKS:

If you have an attack, sit still until the attack has passed and move slowly. Try to keep your head elevated and avoid lying on the side that caused the dizziness. Then perform the Brandt Daroff exercises when you feel able. If these are ineffective see Dr Iseli for further repositioning treatment. Make sure you have good lighting when dizzy and considering using a cane when walking to avoid falls.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop headaches that are severe or lasting.
- You develop continued vomiting.
- A temporary loss or change of vision appears.
- You notice temporary numbness on one side of your body.
- You are temporarily unable to speak.
- Temporary areas of weakness develop.
- You have weakness or numbness in the face, arms, or legs.
- You notice dizziness or difficulty walking.
- You experience slurred speech or difficulty swallowing.



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