

3.15 Ear Nose and Throat - Benign Paroxysmal Positional vertigo

Darren is 42. He is on the phone to the doctor, worried that he is getting vertigo when he turns over in bed and when he looks to the right when driving.

Darren: Do you think I might have a brain tumour doctor.

Provide: Not from the sound of things. You almost certainly have a condition call Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo. Benign means harmless. Paroxysmal means just some of the time. Positional is the position that triggers your symptoms and vertigo means spinning.

Elicit: Are you with me so far?

Darren: Got you.

Provide: Your balance organs (inside your ears) have crystals that are in the wrong place. Those crystals can make you feel that you are still moving, even when your head has stopped turning.

Elicit: Would you like me to try to fix your vertigo?

Darren: Of course.

Provide: Why not come and see one of us? We can do a series of movements called the Epley manoeuvre. The Epley manoeuvre usually empties out those faulty crystals from the wrong part of your balance organs, and can fix your vertigo.

Darren: Alright.

Provide: You may feel a bit giddy for a while after the Epley manoeuvre, so you may prefer to get someone to drive you home. Since your vertigo is predictable: it's probably OK for you to drive. But please don't turn your head to the right, when you are driving, until we have fixed this problem. Just use your eyes to look to the right. And if you get vertigo when you do turn your head: turn your head back to to face forward again. Unpredictable vertigo would mean that you're not allowed to drive.