

## VERTIGO CLINIC

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**What is vertigo?**

If you've ever suddenly felt like you are on a tilt-a-whirl while walking down the street or sitting in your office, then you might have vertigo.

Vertigo is a specific type of dizziness that is characterized by the sudden sensation that you are spinning or that the world around you is spinning. The feeling can come and go or it can last for hours or days. Along with the dizziness, people may also experience nausea or vomiting, headache, double vision or a racing heartbeat. An inner ear problem is often the cause of vertigo.

**What causes vertigo?**

The most common causes of vertigo are inner ear infections or diseases of the ear such as benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), vestibular neuritis, and Meniere's disease.

BPPV can occur when calcium builds up in canals of the inner ear, causing brief dizziness that lasts from 20 seconds to one minute. It is usually brought on by trauma to the head or by moving the head in certain positions.

Vestibular neuritis is brought on by an inner ear infection that causes inflammation around the nerves that help the body sense balance. It results in a severe bout of vertigo that can last a day or more and sometimes includes hearing loss.

Meniere's disease is caused by the buildup of fluid and pressure in the inner ear and can cause dizziness along with ringing in the ears and hearing loss.

Less common causes of vertigo can include head or brain injuries or migraines.

## **Treatment**

If a person does experience repeated bouts of dizziness and hearing loss, it is advisable to see an ear, nose and throat specialist to seek appropriate treatment. Dizziness could also be a symptom of a serious neurological or cardiac cause.

Vertigo that is caused by BPPV can be treated by physical therapy where patients learn a series of exercises known as the canalith repositioning procedure -- slow maneuvers for positioning your head to shift particles in the inner ear.

If a person has Meniere's disease, the doctor might prescribe a low sodium diet and a diuretic to decrease fluid pressure in the inner ear.

Some vertigo sufferers can also be treated with certain prescription medications including calcium channel blockers, beta blockers and tricyclic antidepressants.

While it can be disorienting, vertigo is not a dangerous condition. For people with BPPV, he said it can become hazardous if the person is working on something such as scaffolding when they get a case of vertigo. People with Meniere's disease are restricted from some jobs including airline pilot and truck or bus drivers.

## **What is the outcome for people with vertigo ?**

People with a problem limited to the inner ear tend to have a very good prognosis. Unfortunately, not all people fully heal from an inner ear problem because of damage to the ear structures.

Dizziness caused by a brain problem is harder to recover from and usually requires more vestibular rehabilitation visits.

People who have both inner ear and brain problems can improve, but recovery is often less than those who have problems in just one system.

## **Contact Us**

Call us to schedule an appointment with the ENT Specialists and Neuroequilibrium vertigo assessment team at Columbia Asia Hospital, Whitefield - Bangalore for a comprehensive assessment and treatment for vertigo.