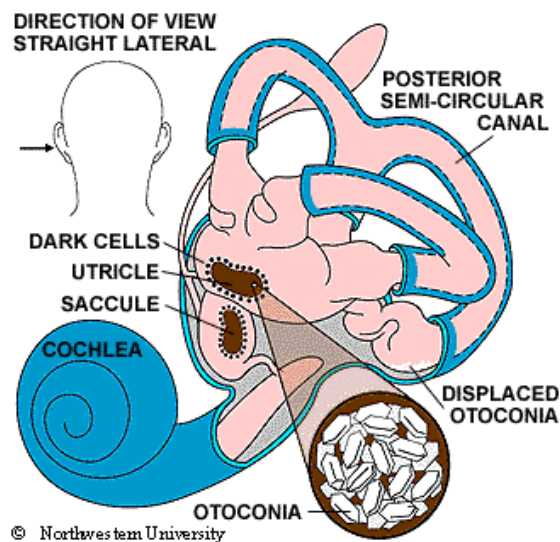


Centre for Hearing and Balance Disorders (Audiology)

Balance - Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV)



What is Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV)?

Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) causes short episodes of vertigo and dizziness when you move your head in certain directions. It is caused by small crystals of calcium carbonate due to debris that has collected within a part of the inner ear.



Patient Information

This debris, called otoconia, is made up of small crystals of calcium carbonate (sometimes referred to colloquially as 'ear rocks'). With head movement, the displaced otoconia shift, sending false signals to the brain.

Symptoms of BPPV

Symptoms of BPPV are almost always brought on by a change in head position. Getting out of bed and rolling over in bed are two common 'problem' motions. Some people feel dizzy and unsteady when they tip their heads back to look up. An intermittent pattern of these symptoms is normal.

About 20% of all dizziness is due to BPPV. The most common cause of BPPV in people under age 50 is head injury. About 50% of dizziness in older people is due to BPPV. In half of all cases, there is no known reason for the onset of BPPV.

BPPV is also associated with migraine.

Tests

Diagnostic tests for BPPV include tests that look for the characteristic nystagmus (jumping of the eyes), such as the Dix-Hallpike test and videonystagmography (VNG).

Treatment

Particle-repositioning manoeuvres: This includes the Epley manoeuvre and the Semont-liberatory manoeuvre, which are very effective in treating BPPV and can be performed in the balance clinic in about 20 minutes. The aim of these manoeuvres is to move the detached otoconia out of one of the semicircular canals.

After you have had an Epley manoeuvre performed you might feel tired that night, you may also feel a little unwell or unsteady. This is normal and will pass after a short period of time, but for this reason **you should not drive yourself home.**

It is important that you avoid tilting your head back for 2 days after having the treatment (looking up at the ceiling) or forwards (looking down to the floor).

Patient Information

Driving

The DVLA recommends that you should stop driving if you get sudden, unexpected and disabling attacks of dizziness. If you have any concerns about this please contact your GP for advice.

If you have any further questions please telephone Bernadette Parker on 024 7696 6444.

Further Information

This information is based on information from the Vestibular Disorders Association:

<http://www.vestibular.org/vestibular-disorders/specific-disorders/bppv.php>

www.patient.co.uk

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6444 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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