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## Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo

### Overview

#### What is benign paroxysmal positional vertigo?

Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) is a problem with the nerves and structure of the inner ear that causes you to suddenly feel dizzy.

### Symptoms

#### What are the symptoms of BPPV?

You might feel like the room is spinning around in circles or that your surroundings are moving. This feeling is called "vertigo." BPPV is associated with feelings of vertigo when you move a certain way (such as turning your head, standing up, rolling over in bed or lying down). You might also feel nauseous (sick to your stomach) at the same time. The nausea and dizziness go away in a few seconds. BPPV is bothersome, but it's rarely serious.

### Causes & Risk Factors

#### What causes BPPV?

Your inner ear contains tiny calcium particles that help you keep your balance. Normally, these particles are distributed evenly in the inner ear's 3 canals. When you move your head, the calcium particles stimulate nerve cells inside the canals. The nerve cells then send your brain a signal telling it which direction your head is moving.

Sometimes, the particles can break loose and clump together in one of the canals. When this happens, the nerve cells tell your brain that your head has moved more than it actually has. This incorrect signal results in vertigo.

BPPV is most often associated with aging, but it can also occur after you hit your head or (in more rare cases) you develop a virus in the inner ear.

### Diagnosis & Tests

#### How is BPPV diagnosed?

Your doctor may suspect BPPV if you feel dizzy when you move your head or body in certain ways. Several tests can help your doctor tell if your dizziness is caused by BPPV, such as a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan or an electronystagmography (ENG).

### Treatment

## How is BPPV treated?

Your doctor can show you some easy head movements to help move the particles out of the inner ear canals and into areas where they will not cause episodes of vertigo. Doing these movements can stop the symptoms and may keep the dizziness from coming back. Your doctor may also give you medicine to treat the nausea and dizziness. In more severe cases, surgery may be necessary to fix the problem.

## Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What could be causing my dizziness?
- Are there any tests we should perform to rule out other diseases?
- Is there anything I can do at home to stop the dizziness or make myself feel better?
- When should we consider surgery?
- Is it okay to work out while I'm experiencing BPPV?
- Will my BPPV ever go away?
- When should I call my doctor?
- Do you have any materials I could read about BPPV?

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