



Vertigo

Vertigo is a spinning feeling. It affects the inner ear, the brain's gravity-and-motion detector.

After proper diagnosis, most cases of vertigo are easily treated in the health care provider's office or at home with self-care.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

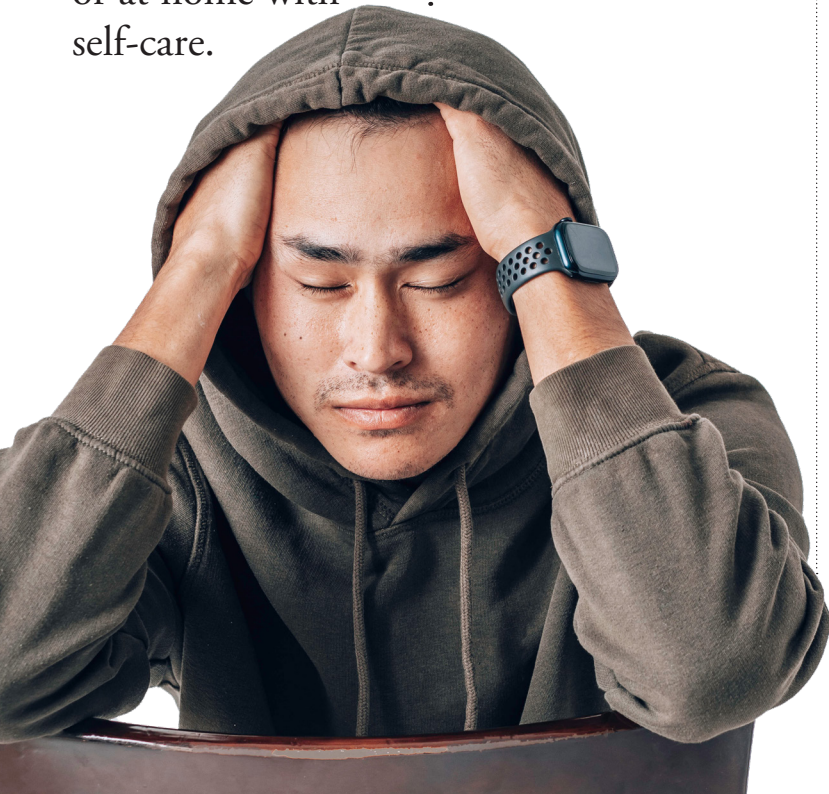
- Sense that the room is spinning
- Nausea and vomiting
- Eyes move from side to side rapidly and uncontrollably
- Floating, rocking, and/or rolling feeling
- Sense of walking on an uneven surface
- Loss of balance
- Ringing in your ears



CAUSES, RISK FACTORS & CARE

Vertigo is caused by a problem with the inner ear, nervous system, heart, blood vessels in the brain or with blood pressure. Causes are:

- **Benign Positional Vertigo (BPV).** This is the most common type. It may happen when you turn over in bed, get up, sit down, bend over, or just tilt your head. This sensation usually disappears on its own within a few days of the first episode. Although BPV is usually not serious, it can also be a symptom of an auditory tumor. Risk factors for BPV are aging, viral infections, and a prior head injury.
- **Orthostatic hypotension.** This is low blood pressure when changing positions.
- **Ménière's disease.** This condition may be due to spasms of blood vessels in the inner ear, fluid retention in the inner ear, or allergic reactions. Ménière's disease is linked with a decrease in hearing and tinnitus. It sometimes leads to permanent hearing loss. While attacks of Ménière's disease can continue for many years, some symptoms can be controlled with medication.
- **Multiple sclerosis.** The covering that protects nerves (myelin) is destroyed. Over time, scar tissue (sclerosis) forms where the myelin used to be in the brain and spinal cord. Scar tissue or inflammation in the brain may cause vertigo symptoms.





SELF-CARE

Orthostatic Hypotension:

- Don't jump out of bed. Go from a lying position to a sitting position slowly. Sit on the edge of the bed a few minutes. Stand up slowly.
- From a sitting position, stand up slowly. Hold onto the arms of the chair or the head of the bed for support.
- If you feel lightheaded, sit back down for a few minutes. Take a few deep breaths. Get up again, slowly.

Ménière's Disease:

- Lie still in bed until the dizziness and nausea are gone. Don't change positions too fast.
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- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco.
- Do not drive, climb ladders, or work around dangerous machinery.
- Decrease the amount of salt in your diet.
- Get plenty of sleep and take steps to manage stress.
- Avoid bright lights and reading when you have a spinning feeling.
- Resume your normal activities when symptoms go away.

Benign Positional Vertigo (BPV):

Ask your health care team to refer you to a therapist who has training for BPV. They can assist with the right type of exercises to treat this condition. The goal of therapy is to move the calcium carbonate particles from the part of the ear canal so they don't cause uncomfortable symptoms.