

Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV)

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What is benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV)?

Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) is a problem with the inner ear. It causes you to suddenly feel dizzy. It is the most common form of vertigo. It is the easiest to treat.

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. This could be when you turn your head, stand up, roll over in bed, or lie down. You might also feel nauseated at the same time. The nausea and dizziness usually go away in a few seconds. BPPV is bothersome, but it's rarely serious.

What causes BPPV?

Your inner ear contains tiny calcium particles that help you keep your balance. When you move your head, the calcium particles stimulate nerve cells. The nerve cells send your brain a signal telling it which direction your head is moving.

Normally, these particles are distributed evenly in the inner ear's 3 canals. 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. It can also occur after you hit your head.

How is BPPV diagnosed?

Your doctor may suspect BPPV if you feel dizzy when you move your head or body in certain ways. He or she will conduct a physical exam and ask you about your symptoms. They may order tests to rule out other causes of your vertigo. These could include a CT scan, MRI, Electroencephalogram (EEG), or Electronystagmography (ENG).

Can BPPV be prevented or avoided?

The only thing you can do to prevent or avoid BPPV is to avoid head positions that trigger it.

BPPV treatment

Your doctor can show you some easy head maneuvers that will help. They 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. They may keep the dizziness from coming back.

Living with BPPV

BPPV can be bothersome and uncomfortable. But the simple head maneuvers usually help the symptoms go away. It can come back at any time, but is easily treatable.

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?
- Is it okay to exercise while I'm experiencing BPPV?
- Will my BPPV ever go away?

Resources

[U.S. National Library of Medicine, Benign Positional Vertigo](#)