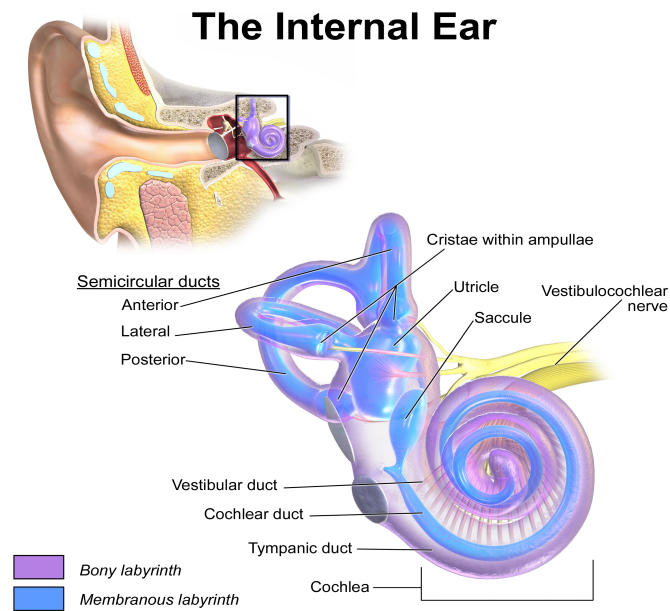


Dizziness



Our balance system helps us walk, run, and move without falling.

Balance is controlled through signals to the brain from your eyes, the inner ear (vestibular system), and the sensory systems of the body (such as the skin, muscles, and joints).

What should I do if I have a problem with balance or dizziness?

It is important to see your doctor if you have

unexplained dizziness or balance issues.

You should have a medical examination with special attention given to checking for problems that can be associated with balance difficulties. There may be special tests that your doctor orders to ascertain which part of the complex balance system is affected.

What is dizziness?

Dizziness affects 20% of the general population. In fact, dizziness is a very common reason that adults seek medical attention.

When your balance is weakened, you may feel unsteady, woozy, or disoriented. You may have blurred vision or experience a sensation of movement. It may seem that the room is spinning (vertigo). You may not be able to walk without staggering, or you may not even be able to get up. Sometimes nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, faintness, changes in heart rate and blood pressure, fear, and anxiety accompany the dizziness and balance problems.

Dizziness can be associated with a variety of conditions, including:

- Viral or bacterial infections, including ear infections
- Foreign objects in the ear canal
- Blood pressure changes
- Vascular problems
- A fistula (hole) in the inner ear
- Meniere's disease
- Medicines or drugs poisonous to the ear or balance system (ototoxic medicines)

- Multiple sclerosis
- Visual disorders
- Tumours, especially of the vestibular portion of the eighth cranial nerve (known as acoustic neuroma)
- Head injury
- Migraine

What is vertigo?

Vertigo is a type of dizziness in which there is a sense of movement or spinning. Changing position, such as sitting up in bed, can make it seem worse. Nausea and vomiting may accompany the vertigo at times.

Balance testing

Balance system assessment is often recommended when a person has:

- Rapid, involuntary eye movement (also known as nystagms)
- Complaints of vertigo or dizziness
- Balance dysfunction
- Difficulty walking
- Suspected disease of the vestibular system

Tests of the balance system are performed to help determine:

- The cause of the symptoms
- Where in the balance system the problem is occurring
- What changes are happening in the balance function
- How vision, the inner ear, and other sensory systems affect functional balance

Results of the clinical examination, hearing test and any specialised balance testing can help determine the best treatment for your dizziness.

Reference; The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Audiology Series 2019.

Picture; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inner_ear