



What is vestibular rehabilitation therapy?

Vestibular rehabilitation therapy is an effective exercise based program. It improves the symptoms of dizziness, vertigo and unsteadiness resulting from inner ear conditions such as:

- Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV)
- Vestibular neuronitis or labyrinthitis
- Post acoustic neuroma removal
- Vestibular migraine
- Ototoxicity
- Trauma.

A doctor or audiologist can refer you for an initial assessment with a vestibular physiotherapist if your symptoms are made worse by movement or changing position, or if you have problems with balance or unsteadiness when walking or with usual daily activity.

What happens in a session?

The initial assessment will take about one hour. You may be given an exercise program to do at home. These exercises are tailored to your balance symptoms. Generally the program takes between 10-15 minutes to do and consists of balance and walking exercises as well as exercises to reduce the dizzy feelings you may get with particular movements. You can do your program up to three times per day.

Follow up appointments are 30 minutes long and will be organised as needed. The first follow up will usually be scheduled in 1-2 weeks and any further reviews (up to a maximum of six) are usually spaced one month apart. These sessions are used to monitor your progress and check your exercise program.

What are the likely outcomes?

Vestibular rehabilitation is effective in reducing dizzy symptoms with movement, improving balance, walking more steadily, reducing the risk of falls and improving confidence and endurance.

It can help you get back to normal everyday activities like maintaining balance in the shower, walking, sport or housework. It can also help to reduce fatigue and increase independence.



Where can I attend vestibular physiotherapy?

Public physiotherapy services

Vestibular physiotherapy is provided at The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. Once your referral is received from a General Practitioner you will be placed on a waiting list and we will contact you when an appointment is available.

Vestibular rehabilitation is also provided in various community and hospital settings. If you would like to see a physiotherapist closer to your home call the Audiology Department on 03 9929 8270 or contact your doctor.

Private physiotherapy services

If you have private health insurance, you may be eligible for a rebate from your health fund. Subsidised physiotherapy services may also be available if your doctor refers you to a vestibular physiotherapist via a GP management plan. For more information, please see your doctor.

References

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