

VESTIBULAR DISORDERS

Audiologists can help.

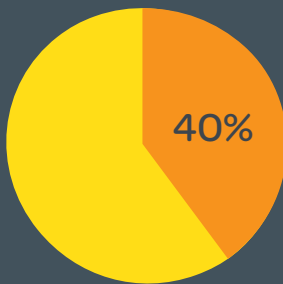
What are vestibular disorders?

The vestibular system uses our eyes, ears and brain to help us to maintain our balance and move without falling. Vestibular disorders occur when the vestibular system becomes damaged or diseased. Two of the most common vestibular disorders are benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) and Ménière's disease.

Symptoms may include **dizziness, nausea, vertigo, feeling off balance** and **lightheadedness**.

Vestibular disorders are most common in people over the age of 40, but children with hearing loss are also at risk.

More than **40%** of people will experience debilitating dizziness at some point in their lives.



Among adults over the age of 40, vestibular dysfunction increases the likelihood of a fall by

12
TIMES

POSSIBLE CAUSES

- Disease, including viral and bacterial infections
- Dysfunction of the balance system in the inner ear
- Head injury
- Some autoimmune disorders
- Genetic conditions
- Prolonged use of certain medications
- Environmental factors
- Allergies

Potential treatments

Vestibular rehabilitation: A series of customized exercises can help reduce dizziness and improve balance. An audiologist can provide vestibular rehabilitation or may refer you to a physiotherapist, occupational therapist or physician.

Medications: Some medications can alleviate the symptoms of vestibular disorders. An audiologist may refer you to a physician for a prescription.

Dietary changes: Dietary changes such as reducing sugar or salt intake, drinking more liquids, avoiding caffeine and limiting alcohol consumption can alleviate the symptoms of some vestibular disorders like Ménière's disease.

Surgery: If medication, vestibular rehabilitation and dietary changes are not effective, inner ear surgery may be an option to control vestibular disorder symptoms.

Counselling: Long-term symptoms of vestibular disorders can affect your mental health. If you are struggling to cope with a vestibular disorder, your audiologist may refer you to a mental health professional.

Vestibular disorders can become debilitating.

If left untreated, vestibular disorders can lead to **anxiety, depression** and **irritability**.



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If you think you or someone you know may have a vestibular disorder, contact an audiologist today for an assessment and to learn about treatment options.