

# What Is Vertigo

**V**ertigo is not really a cardiovascular condition, but someone asked me to write on this topic and here it is

VERTIGO is a symptom, not a condition in itself. Telling someone that you have vertigo is like saying you have back ache. Vertigo is the sensation that the environment around you is spinning in circles. It can also make you feel dizzy and off balance. The word vertigo originate from Latin word, *VERTERE* , meaning “to turn”.

It can make you feel unsteady on your feet, lightheaded, faint or feel like you are in motion when you are not. Some people also have associated nausea and vomiting. It may last for a few seconds or a few days, but feels very uncomfortable to the patient. Fortunately, it is rarely dangerous, but it can provoke falls, which is a leading cause of death from injury in older adults

**TYPES OF VERTIGO** There are mainly two types of vertigo- **PERIPHERAL AND CENTRAL**. **1.PERIPHERAL VERTIGO** This is the most common type of vertigo and many cases originate from the inner ear, which is the headquarters of our body’s vestibular system, which regulates our sense of balance and spatial orientation.

The common triggers include dehydration, alcohol use, hormonal imbalance during perimenopause, certain foods, and also stress

**A) BENIGN PAROXYSMAL POSITIONAL VERTIGO (BPPV)** This is more prevalent in older adults and occurs when tiny crystals in the inner ear called **CANALITHS** shift out of place. Certain head moments, such as turning over in bed can trigger intense symptoms.

**B) VESTIBULAR MIGRAINES** This is variant of conventional migraines. This form does not always involve a headache, but produce vertigo and other balance related symptoms.

C) VESTIBULAR NEURITIS This is typically caused by a viral infection, and this condition is often called acute labyrinthitis, and it is an inflammation of the balance apparatus of the inner ear D) MENIERE'S DISEASE This condition is often associated with ringing in the ears and progressive, low frequency, hearing loss. This is often prompted by a change in the inner ear fluid volume

CENTRAL VERTIGO This is less common. It occurs when you have a condition affecting your brain, like an infection, stroke or traumatic brain injury. People with central vertigo, usually have more severe symptoms like severe instability or difficulty in walking.

OTHER ASSOCIATED SYMPTOMS Vertigo is often associated with other symptoms, such as nausea and vomiting, dizziness, balance issues, hearing loss in one or both ears, ringing in the ears, headache, motion sickness, and a feeling of fullness in the ear. Often people have what is called nystagmus which is a jerking eye movement, during which your eyes move from side to side rapidly and uncontrollably.

TREATMENT STRATEGIES If dizziness is associated with other symptoms, such as sudden changes in the vision, hearing or speech, numbness or tingling on one side of your body or face, you will need emergency medical attention, to make sure that you're not having a stroke or other neurological conditions.

In any case, your first vertigo attack should prompt you to make a doctor's visit, since there is no way of knowing whether the course is common or serious.

MEDICATIONS are often prescribed to decrease the sensitivity of the inner ear, reducing dizziness, and nausea that comes with it. Your doctor may give you meclizine or antihistamines like cyclizine to ease vertigo symptoms.

A canalith repositioning procedure called EPLEY MANUEVER which involves moving your head through a series of positions to shift the ear crystals to other areas that won't trigger dizziness.

Vestibular therapy or balance rehabilitation, in which you learn exercises to help you manage dizziness, and balance problems. This type of physical therapy helpful in most cases.

Most important thing is to be active. Whether your episode is short or long, chronic or episodic, avoid being sedentary when symptoms subside. It causes more harm than good to sit and wait for the next episode of vertigo.

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