



WHAT CAUSES DIZZINESS

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ABOUT NORTHWEST PHYSIOTHERAPY GROUP

Northwest Physiotherapy Group was first established as Essendon and Moonee Ponds Physiotherapy Clinic in 1990. We have over 50 years combined experience in muscle and joint conditions, and a fully equipped, purpose built facility with state of the art pilates studio and rehab gym.

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WHAT CAUSES DIZZINESS?

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WHAT CAUSES DIZZINESS?

Dizziness is commonly experienced in the adult population, and the prevalence increases with age. Patients often describe balance problems in terms of vertigo, dizziness, light-headedness, and motion sickness. One person may describe a balance problem using one or more of these terms, another person may use a different combination of these terms to describe the very same condition. Generally dizziness is caused by a disruption of the systems that maintains our balance.

Our balance and the way we orientated ourselves in space is primarily measured by three sensory systems:

The visual system (our eyes 'looking' and therefore telling us where we are)

The vestibular system of the inner ear (this apparatus tells us the motions of our head and where we are in relation to gravity without having to 'look')

The general sensory system in our joints, muscles and skin, that provides us information regarding motion, pressure, and position (proprioception).

These three systems continuously feed information to the brainstem and brain about our position in space relative to gravity. The brain, in turn, process and matches these data and also uses the information to make adjustments to our head, body, joints, and eyes. When all three sensory systems and the brain are properly functioning, they maintain a healthy balance system. When the balance system is not functioning correctly, either the brain is unable to process the information or there is a disorder in the three sensory systems, it results in a disruption of balance and therefore causes dizziness symptoms.

BPPV

About 20% of all dizziness is due to BPPV (benign paroxysmal positional vertigo), being the most common cause of dizziness. The symptoms of BPPV include dizziness, light-headedness, imbalance and nausea. These symptoms are often triggered by a change of head position in relation to gravity, such as looking up, rolling over in bed, or bending down to pick things off floor.

BPPV is caused by a disorder of the vestibular system. This is thought to be due to the otoconia crystals dislodging and moving into the posterior canal (or any one of

the three canals, but most commonly the posterior canal), causing a disturbance to the sensors of the vestibular system thus producing an episode of vertigo. The symptoms are often short lived (15-30seconds), which settles or eases when the head is stabilised.

When a person suffers from BPPV, their symptoms may worsen as the body tries to compensate for the altered sensory. An example is if you get dizzy when you turn your head towards the left, you're less likely to want to turn your head towards the left. This may later cause your upper cervical spine to stiffen up. Upper cervical stiffness often causes headaches, dizziness and light-headedness, which may be similar to the symptoms caused by BPPV. A person who suffers from BPPV for a while may also start restricting the amplitude of their movement (or just movement in general), which then leads to deterioration of their proprioception, increasing their sense of imbalance.

VESTIBULAR REHAB

If one of the three sensory systems stated above breaks down, our brain then has to rely on the other two sensory to maintain balance. However we may become overly dependent on the other sensory system and this can lead to developing new patterns of movement to compensate for the change. These types of adaptation can result in increased dizziness, nausea, headache, neck ache, muscle stiffness, general fatigue, hence making the symptoms much worse.

The goal of vestibular rehab is to determine which sensory system is at fault (and it often may be a combination of all three) and then retrain the brain to recognize and process signals from the vestibular system in coordination with information from vision and proprioception. This often involves desensitizing the balance system to movements that provoke symptoms.

HOW CAN PHYSIOTHERAPY HELP?

At NWPG, our Physiotherapists are trained in the assessment and treatment of BPPV. There are a few simple tests that we can administer to determine if you have BPPV, or what is contributing to your dizziness. These tests may include tests of your cervical spine, as well as other musculoskeletal factors, and tests of general balance and eye movement.

If you have BPPV, some simple movements and exercises can address the problem very effectively. **We have treated many clients successfully with these techniques, and we could have you feeling back to normal in a very short time.**

WHAT TO DO NEXT?

Call us at the clinic on **9370 5654** to book an appointment, or send a request through the website.

Your satisfaction with our professional, caring and thorough service is guaranteed.

(Please bring all reports/scans with you and be prepared to disrobe.)

A life free from dizziness could be just around the corner for you!!

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