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PATIENT INFORMATION

Vestibular migraine

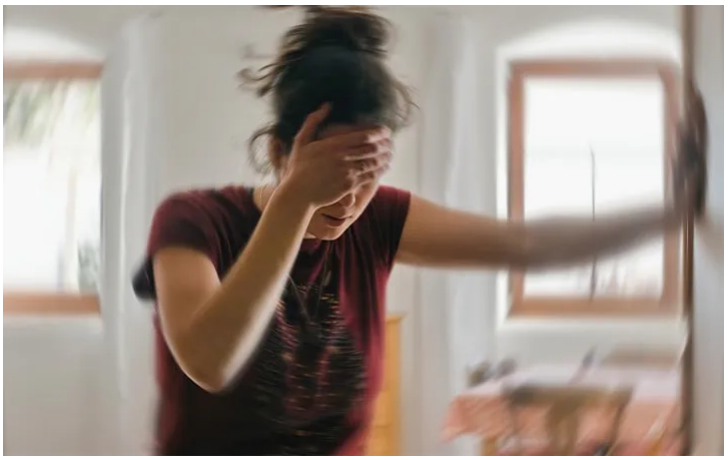
Understanding migraine-related dizziness

What is vestibular migraine?

Vestibular migraine is a type of migraine that can cause vertigo, dizziness and unsteadiness. It affects how the brain processes movement and balance signals. **Episodes can occur without a headache**, even if your last migraine headache was years ago.

Why does it happen?

The exact cause is not fully understood. Migraine often runs in families. Poor or irregular sleep, stress, missed meals, dehydration and hormonal changes can contribute. Triggers vary, and an episode may happen without an obvious trigger.



What might you notice?

- Spinning, rocking, floating or unsteadiness
- Nausea and sensitivity to head movement or busy visual surroundings
- Light or sound sensitivity; sometimes headache or visual aura, such as flashing lights

Episodes commonly last **5 minutes to 72 hours**. Motion sensitivity or imbalance may linger between episodes. A history of motion sickness is common, including feeling unwell when reading as a car passenger.

How is it diagnosed?

Diagnosis involves evaluation of your symptom pattern, migraine history and examination findings. **No single test confirms vestibular migraine.** Tests may help check for other causes of dizziness.

What can I expect?

Symptoms can fluctuate. A personalised plan and regular review can help you gain better control of symptoms and build confidence in daily activities.

What can help?

- **Daily routines:** Prioritise good sleep hygiene, regular meals, hydration, physical activity, and stress management.
- **Medical care:** Your doctor may suggest medication to prevent attacks or relieve symptoms.
- **Vestibular rehabilitation:** An important part of care for ongoing dizziness or imbalance. Exercises improve movement tolerance, balance and confidence.

Sources: Lempert et al. (2022); Smyth et al. (2022); Rova et al. (2024); Johns Hopkins Medicine.