

CAUSES OF DIZZINESS AND VERTIGO

The body maintains balance with sensory information from three systems:



VISION



SOMATOSENSORY/
PROPRIOCEPTION
(MUSCLES AND JOINTS)



VESTIBULAR
(INNER EAR)

Input from these three systems is integrated and processed by the brain. Feedback is sent to the eyes to help maintain steady vision and to the muscles to help maintain posture and balance.



If there is damage or impairment of any of these systems, dizziness, vertigo, and imbalance may occur.



VERTIGO is the perception of movement/spinning, either of the self or of the environment.

DIZZINESS is a general term that describes lightheadedness, a floating sensation, or faintness.

IMBALANCE or disequilibrium is a feeling of being off-balance or a loss of equilibrium.

Vestibular Causes of Dizziness/Vertigo

- Head Injury
- Aging
- Lack of blood flow to the inner ear
- Displacement of "crystals" within the inner ear
- Viral infection
- Migraines can create dizziness/vertigo with or without a headache
- Genetic or environmental factors (exposure to certain drugs or chemicals)
- Structural deformities in the bone that overlies the inner ear
- Benign tumors

Non-Vestibular Causes of Dizziness/Vertigo

- Muscle strain or arthritis
- Aneurysm, stroke, atherosclerosis, and embolism
- Medications
- Damage to nerves that supply sensation to the feet
- Orthostatic hypotension or faintness when sitting or standing
- Cataracts and macular degeneration
- Adjusting to new bifocals/glasses prescriptions
- Psychological disorders like anxiety

To read the full article, head to www.vestibular.org