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## BENIGN POSITIONAL VERTIGO

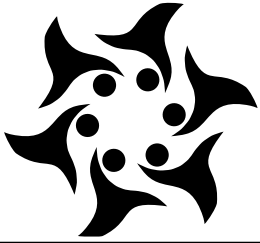
### Background Information

Benign positional vertigo is a disorder of the inner ear, characterized by onset of spinning (vertigo) when a person rolls over in bed onto the affected ear. As well, it can be brought on by other changes in head position, such as looking up over your shoulder. It results from displacement of small crystals within the inner ear. Often there is no clear reason why the crystals should be displaced, although sometimes this condition can come on following a head injury or flu-like illness. Usually benign positional vertigo will resolve spontaneously within a few weeks to a month or so. Sometimes it can be more persistent. The doctor diagnoses this condition on the basis of your history and the eye movements observed when, during physical examination, he lays you back from sitting with your head turned to the side. He may also order other tests, such as balance test or x-rays.

### Treatment:

Positional exercises: The following positional exercises are done by the patient at home and help gradually reposition the crystals within the inner ear.

1. Sit in the middle of your bed with your feet up on the bed, in a position such that when you lay back down on your back your shoulders are just at the edge (side or foot) of the bed.
2. Turn your head to the side that the doctor has identified as your affected ear (**left or right**) and tip your head slightly backwards.
3. Lay backwards fairly briskly so that your shoulders just meet the edge of the bed. Your head will be hanging just slightly over the edge of the bed.
4. Usually, within a few moments, you will sense the onset of spinning. Do not sit up or turn over, but wait in that position until the spinning settles. Usually this will occur within fifteen to twenty seconds. Once the spinning has settled, wait a few moments and then sit up as quickly as you can comfortably manage. After a few moments in the sitting position, you may note the onset of spinning, this time in the opposite direction, that can go on for a few seconds. Wait a few moments, giving your stomach a chance to settle if this maneuver has brought on nausea, and then repeat the maneuver (laying back and sitting up) about a half dozen times or until the maneuver fails to bring on spinning dizziness. If both your ears are affected, you should repeat the exercise for the opposite ear.



This exercise should be performed twice a day and continue until you see the doctor in follow up, or until you have done the exercise for two or three days in a row without bringing on any dizziness.

Particle repositioning Maneuver:

If benign positional vertigo persists, especially if it has not settled following a trial of positional exercises, then the following treatment can often be helpful. This maneuver replaces the displaced crystal particles into the compartment of the ear where they belong. The particle repositioning maneuver, a treatment that the doctor can perform for you in his office, is a physical treatment that is similar to the positioning exercises described above.

After you have been treated by the particle repositioning maneuver, it is very important that you not lay down flat for 48 hours after treatment. If you do lay back during this interval, the crystals can be displaced and the dizziness persist. For two nights after treatment you should sleep in a semi-upright position, such as in a “Lazy-Boy” recliner, with your head supported so that it is as nearly vertical as possible. In the 48 hours after treatment, you should avoid bending your head forward, straining or lifting. After the 48 hour period, you can resume normal activity. The doctor will usually see you in follow up one month following treatment.

# Left Ear/Side



Start sitting on a bed and turn your head 45° to the left. Place a pillow behind you so that on lying back it will be under your shoulders.

Lie back quickly with shoulders on the pillow and head reclined onto the bed. Wait for 30 seconds.

Turn your head 90° to the right (without raising it) and wait again for 30 seconds.

Turn your body and head another 90° to the right and wait for another 30 seconds.

Sit up on the right side.