

BPPV (Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo)

What is BPPV?

BPPV is a common problem that can make you feel like everything around you is spinning, moving, or not steady. It happens because of changes in the inner ear. BPPV is short for the medical term **benign paroxysmal positional vertigo**. Benign [beh-NINE] means it's not dangerous, even if it feels scary. Paroxysmal [pah-rox-IS-mahl] means it happens suddenly, gets better quickly, and then happens again. Positional [puh-ZIH-shun-al] means it happens when you move your head in certain ways. Vertigo [VER-tih-go] is feeling dizzy, like you are spinning or moving, even when you're not.

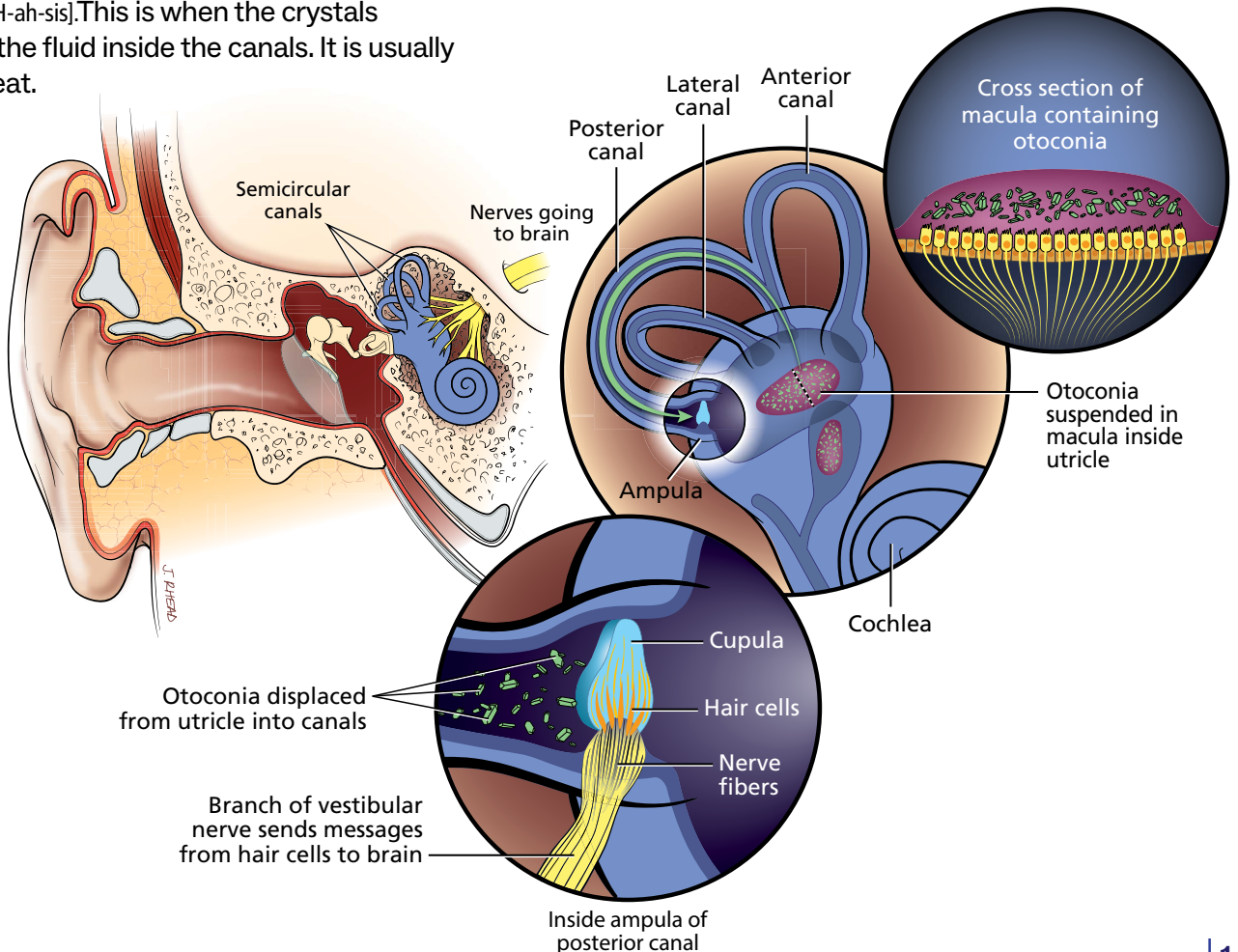
What causes BPPV?

BPPV happens when crystals (otoconia) in the inner ear move from where they are. They can float or get stuck in one of the nearby semi-circular canals. When they move inside the canals, your brain gets a wrong message. This can make you feel like you're spinning or moving, even when you're not, and can happen when you roll over in bed or sit up quickly.

The most common kind of BPPV is **canalithiasis** [cah-nahl-leh-THIGH-ah-sis]. This is when the crystals move freely in the fluid inside the canals. It is usually very easy to treat.

How is BPPV diagnosed?

X-rays and lab tests cannot tell you if you have BPPV. The most common way to know if you have BPPV is a bedside test. During this test, your healthcare provider moves your head to certain positions while watching for certain eye movements. This is called the Dix-Hallpike test or the roll test.



How is BPPV treated?

Medicine can't cure BPPV and may slow recovery. Surgery is rarely done. Most people are treated in their healthcare provider's office with simple movements to help guide the crystals back to their normal position. The movements only take a few minutes and have a high rate of success. They can usually be done during the same appointment as your diagnosis.

In some cases, you can be taught to do these movements at home with help from a family member or friend. This is called **self-repositioning**.

Have your healthcare provider do the movements for you, instead of self-repositioning, if you:

- Have a history of neck, joint, or spine problems
- Are over age 65
- Have a history of falls or a fear of falling
- Have severe or disabling symptoms

What can I expect during treatment?

You can expect to feel symptoms of dizziness during the treatment. In more severe cases, you may feel disoriented or sick to your stomach. After treatment, your symptoms may already be a lot better. However, it can take a few days to a week for your symptoms to completely clear. You may need to do the treatment more than once to clear your symptoms completely. **Call your healthcare provider if your vertigo and balance do not get better within 7 to 14 days.**

It's important to know that while the crystals are out of place, you may still feel sick and be sensitive to motion. You may also feel unsteady on your feet so you need to take care that you do not fall.

If you are over 65, your risk of falling and injury is much greater. Ask your healthcare provider if you should do certain exercises or have balance therapy to lower your risk of falls.

What if the self-repositioning doesn't work the first time?

- Some people need more than one treatment session to get the crystals back in place.
- Your type of BPPV may need a different treatment. Other treatments may be needed to treat the different types of BPPV.
- You may need the help of a healthcare provider who specializes in BPPV to help you do them correctly.
- You may continue to have some vertigo even after the crystals have been put back into place. It should go away over the next few days or weeks. **If your symptoms don't go away, call your healthcare provider.** You may need more tests to confirm your diagnosis and to help you find the right treatment.

Can I get BPPV again?

Yes. Your BPPV may come back. Medical research has not found any way to keep BPPV from coming back. However, if it does come back, it can be treated the same way and usually with great success. The chances of it coming back are higher if your BPPV was caused by trauma or a medical condition.

Notes

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