

B.E.S.T. PHYSICAL THERAPY NEWS

BEST Physical Therapy is proud to announce a FREE

Lecture:

by Nancy Block, PT, ATC:
“Balance and Dizziness”

May 19, 2010 at 6:30pm at our Cupertino clinic

All attendees will be eligible to win 2 free movie tickets!

Call now to reserve your seat!

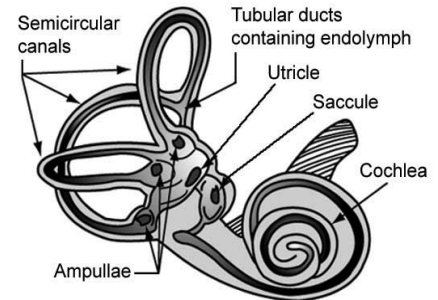


Figure 2: The Vestibular System - semicircular canals and otolith organs

Dizziness is something that almost everyone has experienced at one time in their lives. A momentary drop in blood pressure and blood flow to the head that occurs when a person rises from a chair or lying position (orthostatic hypotension) can throw off a person's balance for a few minutes, but rarely has lasting effects. More persistent dizzy spells can come from other sources and cause falls and other detrimental effects if not treated properly. Dizziness over the age of 65 exists in as much as 8% of the population, occurs more frequently in women than men, and increases in prevalence as we age.

The brain uses input from several sources to maintain a person's sense of balance:

1. Vision gives you information about your position in relationship to the rest of the world. It actually overrides information coming from other balance-sensing systems.
2. Sensory Nerves in your joints send messages to the brain describing where your limbs are in space (proprioception).
3. A portion of the inner ear called the labyrinth detects motion and changes in body position and then sends signals to the brain to maintain an upright position. If these signals are faulty, vertigo may occur.

Depending on the source of the symptoms, there are many physical therapy strategies that can be taught to improve one's balance and walking safety including exercise, fall prevention education, gait training and possibly the use of an assistive device as needed.

This is the time of year when many people complain about seasonal allergy symptoms such as runny noses, congestion, and sneezing. Allergies occur when the immune system overreacts to a particular substance. Outdoor allergies may be to pollen and mold spores, but indoor allergies can occur as well to dust mites, mold and pet dander. Here are a few things you can do to find relief:

1. Try an over the counter allergy medicine or prescription steroid spray. Oral antihistamines will block histamines which encourage inflammation and cause sneezing, runny nose and watery eyes.
2. Minimizing house dust and pet dander will remove some of the stimulants that encourage allergy symptoms. Also, using a saltwater nasal rinse is a natural option that can clear out irritants from the nose and sinus area before they enter the system and cause symptoms.

In some cases, allergic reactions and reactions to medications can cause balance dysfunctions, so these symptoms are important to pay attention to.

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