

# Vertigo

Vertigo is a very common condition. With vertigo you might feel like your head (or the room) is spinning or whirling. Vertigo can make it hard to stand or walk and you may feel off balance. It can also make you feel sick to your stomach (nauseated).

There are many causes for vertigo. Your doctor might arrange for some tests to find the cause, but this is not always necessary. Once your healthcare team has assessed you clinically, they will focus on managing your symptoms.



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## When to Get Help

**Go to the nearest Emergency Department or Urgent Care Centre if you are dizzy AND:**

- You have weakness or numbness in one of your arms or legs.
- You faint or lose consciousness.
- Your symptoms get worse over time, despite a reasonable amount of recovery time.
- You are unable to walk or have trouble coordinating your body movements.
- You are seeing double or experiencing loss of vision.
- You have trouble speaking or you are slurring your words.
- You have a severe headache that comes on suddenly and is quite different from other headaches that you've had in the past.
- You have a stiff neck.
- You have a high fever that doesn't seem to be coming down.
- You cannot stop throwing up (vomiting).

**See your family doctor or go to a walk-in clinic if you are experiencing any of the following:**

- Your vertigo does not go away after one week.
- Your vertigo comes and goes, and it is affecting your everyday activities.
- You notice a change in your hearing.

## Recommended Follow-Up

- Follow up in \_\_ days.

Name of Provider

Reason

Date/Time

Location

Contact Info

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**To Learn More Ask:**

- Your health care provider.
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca)



## How to Care for Yourself at Home

### When You Feel Unwell

- Lie down for a minute or two, or until the feeling goes away. Resting in a quiet, dark room may ease symptoms.
- When you lie down, lie down with your head raised up on a pillow. Lying flat on your back can make your vertigo worse.
- Take slow, deep breaths. Try to avoid or minimize stress. Yoga and meditation may help.
- Sit up slowly and stay sitting for 1 to 2 minutes before standing.
- Stand up slowly.
- Move slowly. When you turn, try to move your whole body and not just your head.
- Take medication as directed.
- Engage in any rehabilitation exercises prescribed by your physical therapist. This may improve balance and reduce vertigo symptoms.
- Try the Epley maneuver (See additional information, right).

### FOR YOUR SAFETY, FOR ONE (1) WEEK AFTER YOUR SYMPTOMS HAVE GONE AWAY

- **DO NOT** drive
- **DO NOT** operate large machinery
- **DO NOT** climb ladders or do other activities involving height

### TO PREVENT FALLS OR OTHER INJURIES

- Keep your home free of tripping hazards like rugs and electrical cords.
- Use nonslip mats in your bath/shower.
- Hold handrails going up or down stairs.
- Use a walking support such as a cane, walker, or a wall.

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Find this information sheet on the ECBC website:

[https://emergencycarebc.ca/clinical\\_resource/patient-information-sheet/vertigo/](https://emergencycarebc.ca/clinical_resource/patient-information-sheet/vertigo/)

### Notes:

### Additional Information

- If you have been advised to try the **Epley Maneuver** (which works for some types of vertigo), here is a helpful video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SLm76jQg3g>



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