

# A PATIENT'S GUIDE TO Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV)

## BENIGN PAROXYSMAL POSITIONAL VERTIGO

There is a common type of dizziness that affects many patients, and occurs more frequently as we get older. This problem has a long name: **benign paroxysmal positional vertigo**. This problem happens usually on one side only, when calcium carbonate crystals from the part of the inner ear migrate into another part of the inner ear where they don't belong. The typical complaint we hear from patients is that they get violently dizzy when tipping their head back. For example, when screwing in a light bulb overhead or, a patient may tell us they get dizzy when rolling over in bed on the left or right side. The dizziness usually begins with a slight delay (from when a patient places their head in the provoking position) and is quite violent. However, if the you remain in that position, the dizziness will subside within 30 seconds. Understandably most people don't remain in the position that long.

The testing you had today has suggested that you have BPPV on the \_\_\_\_\_ side.

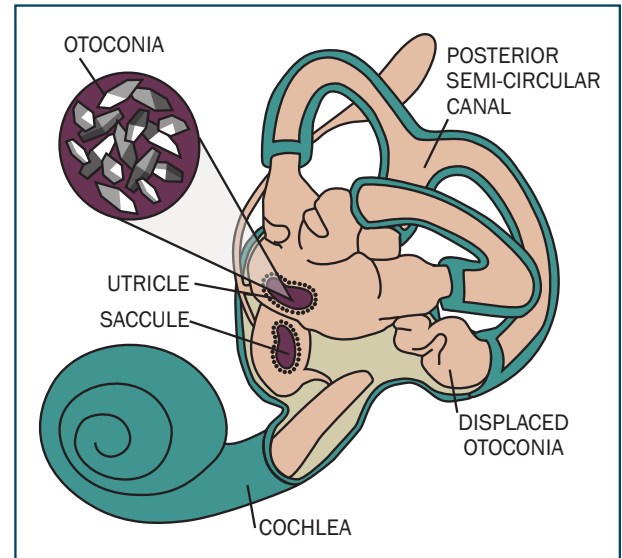
**LEFT      RIGHT**

## TREATMENT

Treatment for BPPV seldom involves medicine or surgery. This is in large part to our understanding of BPPV. It is a mechanical problem. The conventional treatment for the many forms of BPPV is movement of the head and body through a sequence of positions that are designed to move the crystals out of where they should not be, and into a part of the inner ear of balance where they will dissolve and not cause any immediate problems. Usually, the positional treatment (sometimes referred to as canalith repositioning maneuvers, or particle repositioning maneuvers or by various names like, Epley or Semont Maneuvers) takes no more than 5 or 6 minutes, is associated with little, if any, discomfort, and will provide you with significant relief of symptoms within 7 days.

## AFTER THE PROCEDURE

If you have had a particle repositioning maneuver performed today we will ask you to wait at least



10 minutes after the maneuver before going home to avoid any vertigo that may be encountered by the calcium carbonate crystals repositioning themselves. Also, for the next two nights we will ask you to sleep with your head elevated approximately 45 degrees. We would like for you to avoid doing anything that normally would provoke the dizziness for the next seven days. Finally, we would like for you to call us in one week to tell us what percent you are, or, are not improved (100% means completely cured and 0% means no improvement from when you came in to see us for your test.)