

# Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV)

Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo, or BPPV for short, is the most common cause of vertigo, accounting for 20-30% of diagnoses. It is also the most successfully treated cause of vertigo thanks to effective maneuvers for treatment.

## *Symptoms*

- Sudden spinning sensation (vertigo)
- Dizziness lasts 30 seconds-1 minute
- Mild Nausea
- Mild postural instability

## Background

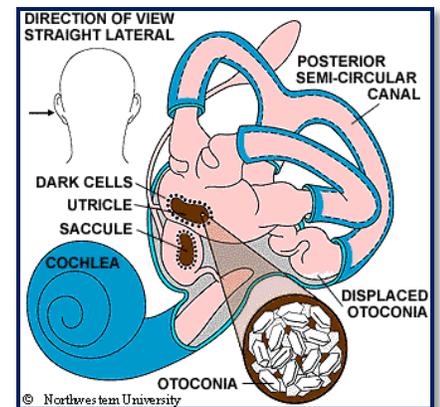
The inner ear is composed of the cochlea (the hearing portion) as well as the vestibular system (the balance portion). There are in turn five sections of the vestibular system, the saccule, the utricle, and three semicircular canals (horizontal, anterior and posterior). The focus of BPPV is the utricle and most often the posterior semicircular canal.

## Cause of BPPV

Often the cause of BPPV is idiopathic, or unknown. Occasionally BPPV can be a result of a head injury, or damage following surgery. Some research suggests an affiliation with migraines or degeneration of the vestibular system.

## Cause of Symptoms

Housed in the utricle are crystals that assist in the detection of movement. In people with BPPV these crystals become dislodged and find their way to the posterior semicircular canal. These crystals in turn cause the semicircular canal to become sensitive to movement of the head. When head movement occurs, either turning the head to the side or sitting up the semicircular canals then detect movement that they are not supposed to, resulting in the sensation of vertigo.



## *Quick Facts*

- The Epley Maneuver is the name of treatment performed for posterior BPPV.
- BPPV has a high recurrence rate.
- BPPV is more common in women and the elderly.