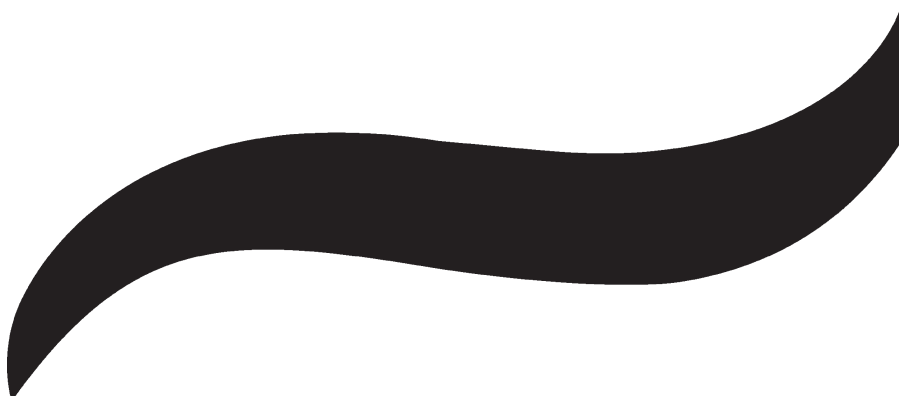




Vestibular Migraine

Information for patients



WHAT IS VESTIBULAR MIGRAINE?

It is a type of migraine that may or may not cause a headache. The symptoms can be variable and last from minutes to several days and will often display a combination of symptoms affecting the ears, vision and balance.

What are the symptoms?

Alongside dizziness, imbalance and vertigo, you may also experience a sensation of pressure in your head or ear, fuzzy head, visual disturbances, headaches, hearing changes or ringing, as well as neck pain. The symptoms will usually settle in between episodes.

Who gets vestibular migraine?

It is more common in women than men and can sometimes be linked to hormones. Those with a history of migraines or Meniere's disease are more likely to have atypical migraines. Research shows that there may be a genetic link with migraines running in families.

Many people with atypical migraines also have anxiety or motion sickness as a child. People with anxiety often respond better if the anxiety is treated at the same time as the migraine.

How can Physiotherapy help this?

The Physiotherapist can help explain this disorder and importance of staying active. Habituation exercises will be used to reduce your dizzy symptoms; along with gait and balance exercises to decrease the risk for falls. A diary may be useful to work out your triggers, as changing these can help reduce your attacks. The therapist will discuss triggers and the helpful hints below look at the most common ones.

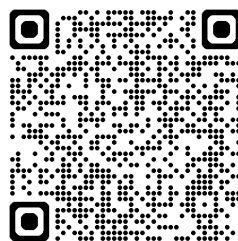
You may also be advised to discuss this with your GP or be referred to a neurologist to help with medical management of your symptoms.

Helpful tips

1. You should treat this condition like how you would normally treat a migraine attack. Taking painkillers or anti-migraine medication can help both the headache and vertigo. Lying down in a dark and quiet room can help too. Taking too many painkillers can cause rebound headaches, please only take as prescribed. This should mean you are not taking more than twice a week or 8 days a month. If you are doing this please contact your GP to advise and review your medication.
2. Avoid migraine triggers like cheese, caffeine, chocolate, citrus, alcohol, dehydration, missed meals and lack of sleep. If your symptoms of vestibular migraine respond to migraine treatment this helps to confirm the diagnosis.
3. If screen use is difficult then you find reducing brightness on the screen or adding a coloured tint helpful. Ensure you take regular breaks away from the screen. If you do this when your symptoms start it will be more manageable than if you wait until they force you to take a break.
4. Keep regular mealtimes, avoid skipping meals and eat a healthy diet. Regular mealtimes will prevent your blood sugar from dipping through the day.
5. You may find eating at regular times also helpful. Keeping a diary can help identify any foods that may be triggers for you. Generally, the evidence suggests a low carbohydrate or low sugar diet is beneficial.
6. Be kind to yourself, stress can trigger migraines so practising mindfulness or relaxation can be helpful.

7. Try to keep a regular sleep routine, going to bed and getting up at the same time every day, even at weekends or days off.
8. Regular exercise is beneficial; evidence suggests a moderate level of activity 3-5 times per week for 20 -30 minutes. This can be any activity, walking, cycling, swimming, tai chi, yoga or gym. It is best to do what you enjoy as those healthy habits are easier to keep. When walking ensure you look around and take in the environment.

For more information on vestibular migraine please see our website
<https://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk/services/physiotherapy/vestibular-physiotherapy/>



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