Audiology Staff

Alexander Bien, MD
Karen Bauer, MA, CCC/A
Kelly Clay, PhD, CCC/A
Morgan Hahn, AuD, CCC/A
Christina Sanderson, AuD, CCC/A
Jim Zynda, MA, CCC/A

Address: 812 N. Keene St.
Columbia, MO
Phone: (573) 817-3000
Vestibular Services

The vestibular system is our body’s GPS device. Located within the inner ear, this system collects information about where we are and how we are positioned, then sends that information to our central nervous system to process so we can remain balanced while our eyes and bodies move. If something disrupts the vestibular system, our brain can’t properly make sense of our location and we may experience a range of symptoms including:

- **Vertigo** - a sense that you are spinning or the world is spinning
- **Dizziness or disequilibrium** - a feeling of imbalance without the spinning
- **Nausea**
- **Anxiety**

Millions of people suffer from vestibular dysfunction severe enough to seek medical treatment. The ENT and Allergy Center of Missouri offers a variety of testing and treatment options for these balance disorders.

Vestibular Disorders

Vestibular disorders can be caused by a number of injuries, illnesses and conditions. The most common causes include:

- **BPPV** (Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo) - the most common cause of vertigo with a true spinning sensation lasting seconds, usually associated with change in head position.
- **Meniere’s Disease** - an episodic vertigo lasting minutes, also characterized by hearing loss, tinnitus (usually roaring) and aural fullness.
- **Vestibular Migraine** - a migraine variant where the headache component is typically absent, but a prevailing sense of imbalance or vertigo occurs. It can be accompanied by other more typical migraine symptoms such as sensitivity to light and sound, and nausea.

Other less frequent causes of vestibular disorders include:

- **Vestibular deterioration with age**
- **Multiple Sclerosis**
- **Ear or other viral infection**
- **Brain injury**
- **Hearing loss**

Vestibular Evaluations

Each of the following tests includes analysis and interpretation of results:

**Videonystagmography (VNG):** A non-invasive, painless test that assesses vestibular (balance) functioning. Goggles are used to monitor eye movements in response to different stimulus conditions.

**Platform Posturography:** A non-invasive, painless, computerized test that reveals which part of the vestibular system you rely on most and which part may be causing problems.

Your physician may order additional tests such as an MRI, CT scan or hearing tests to evaluate more complex disorders.

Treatment

There are a variety of treatment options available to alleviate the symptoms of balance disorders.

**Particle repositioning** consists of maneuvers which move naturally occurring crystals, called otoconia, back to their normal location in the inner ear. This simple set of exercises cures dizziness caused by BPPV about 75% of the time. If your physician prescribes this treatment, it will be performed at the time of your visit. As the condition sometimes recurs, exercise instructions will be given for you to follow at home as necessary.

**Dietary modifications and medication** can also help manage and reduce symptoms of vestibular disorders.

Depending on the disorder, treatment may include formal vestibular therapy performed by a physical therapist.