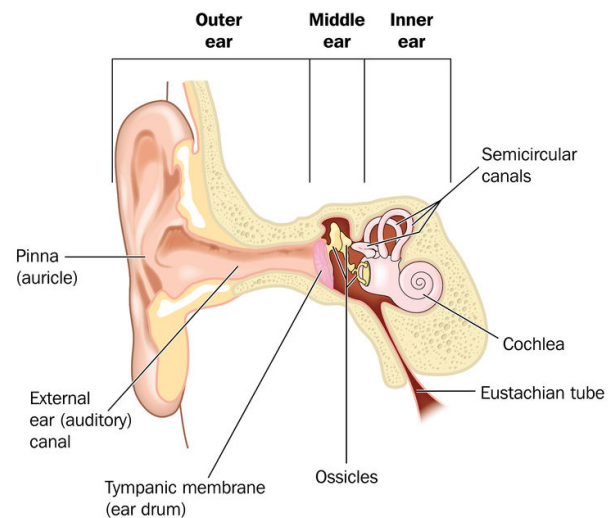


Vertigo and BPPV

Vertigo is the sensation of spinning; even when you are perfectly still you feel like you are moving or that the room is moving around you. There are a number of conditions that can lead to vertigo; inner ear disorders, migraines, tumors, head injuries or stroke. In most cases, the cause of vertigo involves the inner ear, part of the vestibular system. Other symptoms that commonly occur with vertigo are nausea, vomiting, sweating, abnormal eye movements and ringing in the ears. The vestibular system is a part of your body's balance system. It uses the organs of your inner ear to relate to your brain where your head and body are in space to keep your eyes focused and body stable.

One of the most common causes of vertigo is Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV). BPPV is an inner ear disorder that produces short periods of spinning when your head is in a certain position. BPPV occurs when tiny crystals in your ear are dislodged and move into another part of the ear (semicircular canals) where they are not suppose to be. Moving your head a certain direction causes the crystals to the stimulate nerve endings which produces dizziness and vertigo. This happens most commonly with lying down, turning over in bed and looking up.



The signs and symptoms of BPPV are usually very intense but also very brief (last anywhere from a few seconds to 2 minutes) and occur in episodes. It may happen several times for a few days, go away and then return a month later. Movement of the head is typically what triggers the symptoms of BPPV. Along with vertigo you may also have dizziness, an unbalanced or unsteady feeling, nausea and vomiting.

At Lakeshore Physical Therapy, a physical therapist can diagnose BPPV by using a maneuver, which places your head in different positions and looks for involuntary eye movement called nystagmus. The test helps determine the cause of your dizziness and guides the therapist to the best treatment techniques and repositioning maneuvers for effective relief. Fortunately most people recover from BPPV relatively quickly. The therapist will guide you through a sequence of

positions designed to move the crystals back into the appropriate inner ear location. Each position is held for anywhere from 30 seconds to 2 minutes. Successful rehabilitation also includes balance exercises to help strengthen your vestibular system.