

Aging and Dizziness

FACT SHEET



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What is the impact of aging on balance and dizziness?

Dizziness and balance disorders are a frequent problem, especially in older adults. Over the age of 65, the problem of dizziness becomes one of the most common reasons for doctors' office visits and hospitalizations. Some describe dizziness as a spinning sensation or "vertigo". Others describe dizziness as a general feeling of unsteadiness, rocking sensation as if on a boat, and or as "lightheadedness". Regardless of how dizziness is described, it can result in difficulty walking, nausea, anxiety, feelings of being tired, decreased ability to concentrate and even depression. Above all, it can increase the risk for falls, which is a serious health concern among older adults.

What can be done to help dizziness and/or imbalance?

Although there are natural physical changes that occur as we age, dizziness and loss of mobility are not "just part of getting older." Dizziness and imbalance can be caused by a number of factors, such as poor posture or decreased strength, flexibility, and endurance. Other causes include injury, disease (arthritis, diabetes, etc.), inner ear brain disorder (Parkinson's disease, stroke, etc) and/or the use of certain medicines. The good news: most dizziness and balance disorders can be successfully treated. There may be disorders, in your area that perform tests to determine the specific cause(s) of dizziness and imbalance that you might have. These physical therapists can then customize a treatment plan for you. If you think you have a balance problem or have dizziness, the best time to act is now! Ask your doctor or local physical therapist and see what steps you can take. Additional information may be found on the web sites: www.neuropt.org and www.vestibular.org



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