



Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV)

This booklet has been written for people waiting for balance assessment with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. The advice in this booklet will not replace your balance appointment, but it could help you to feel better sooner.

BPPV is a type of vertigo that can safely be treated at home with the right advice and support. The treatments are harmless if it turns out that you do not have BPPV.

If you are not on the waiting list for a balance assessment and are having vertigo symptoms, please see your GP.

If you are on the waiting list and have questions about the information in this booklet, please contact Audiology on 01433 433 283.

What is BPPV?

(BPPV stands for Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo)

BPPV is a common inner ear balance disorder. It usually gives short, intense spells of dizziness when you move your head into certain positions. Often, these are lying down, bending to put shoes on, rolling over in bed or looking up.

In some people, the dizziness is less obvious. For example, if someone has a neck problem which stops them from looking up and down, then they may never get into the position that makes them dizzy.

BPPV can make you feel that you are being pulled to the side when you walk, or that you are wobbly when you move around.

BPPV is caused by crystals in the fluid within the inner ear. The crystals break loose from a different part of the inner ear. This can happen following a blow to the head, an ear infection, or with no known cause. The crystals cause your ear(s) to respond to head movement or gravity in an abnormal way.

How is it treated?

BPPV is treated using exercises that move the crystals back to the part of the ear where they belong. Sometimes BPPV goes away completely (we think the crystals dissolve or stick back down) and sometimes it comes back. Once you learn how to treat it, you won't need to worry about it coming back.

The most popular treatment is called the Epley manoeuvre. This booklet will tell you how you can safely do this at home. This type of treatment is successful for most people.

If the Epley manoeuvre is not successful, or you cannot do it, then we will recommend trying other exercises instead.

Step 1: Am I well enough?

People with good health and mobility will be able to complete the exercises in this booklet.

You are responsible for your safety while you complete the test and exercise at home.

DO NOT TRY THE TEST OR EXERCISES IF:

- You have back or neck injuries or severe pain.
- You have been told to be careful about how you move (e.g. because of shoulder problems or a hernia).
- You need to see a doctor about a heart problem, fainting or seizures.
- You would not be able to do the movements for any reason.

BE CAREFUL - TRY THE EXERCISES ONLY IF YOU HAVE SOMEONE TO HELP YOU IF:

- You have back or neck pain.
- You have had heart problems or seizures in the past.
- You faint easily or have breathing problems.
- You find the movements difficult.
- You are worried the movements might make you feel sick or be sick.

If in doubt, phone an Audiologist for advice.

Step 2: Is it BPPV?

If the symptoms of BPPV sound familiar, then you may have BPPV.

To test for BPPV, we will see whether a big head movement triggers symptoms. Be prepared to feel dizzy for a short time during the test.

The test for **left** BPPV:

- Sit on a bed with plenty of room behind you to lie back safely.
- Turn your head 45° to the **left**.
- Keeping your head turned, tip your head back as much as you can comfortably.
- Lie back, keeping your head turned.
- Wait for 30 seconds, then carefully sit back up.



The test for **right** BPPV:

- Sit on a bed with plenty of room behind you to lie back safely.
- Turn your head 45° to the **right**.
- Keeping your head turned, tip your head back as much as you can comfortably.
- Lie back, keeping your head turned.
- Wait for 30 seconds, then carefully sit back up.

If you have BPPV, then the test will make you dizzy. You may feel like something is moving and you may see the room blur or spin. If someone is with you, they might notice your eyes twist or wobble.

Now you should know whether you have BPPV on the right side, left side, both sides or neither.

If you think you do have BPPV, then you should carry on to step 3. Treat the side which felt worse during the test. If you need to talk to an Audiologist, let us know.

If you do not have BPPV, then there is no need to carry on to step 3.

Step 3: Treatment for BPPV

If you can, watch some videos about treating BPPV:

1 - A doctor completing the Epley manoeuvre with a dizzy patient. This is a gentle and clear video. The link below will take you to a page where you can choose to watch left or right Epley videos.

<https://houseinstitute.com/ear-clinic/ear-clinic-services/vestibular/bppv/>

2 - 'Epley Maneuver for Vertigo at Home'. A lively Youtube video with two physiotherapists - they give lots of good advice.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plEEJqSLeZM>

Below are right and left Epley instructions, which you can follow.

I suggest doing a treatment **once every two to three days** until lying back no longer makes you dizzy. If you think you might have BPPV on both sides, treat one side on one day and the other side on a different day.

Step 4: Following a treatment

For **half an hour after treatment**, try and let things settle in the inner ear:

- Do not lie down
- Avoid bending over forwards or looking upwards
- Be aware that a sudden brief spell of imbalance is quite common

After half an hour, you can go back to moving as normal.

Epley Manoeuvre for Left-sided BPPV:

Sitting comfortably in the middle of your bed, turn your head 45° to the left (1).

Keeping your head 45° to the left, lie down so that your head is hanging over the edge of the bed (2). It can be useful to have someone supporting your head. Alternatively, you may like to rest your shoulders on a pillow (as shown in the diagram below).

This may provoke some dizziness/vertigo. Stay in this position for at least 60 seconds or until the dizziness stops, whichever is longer.

Keeping your head tilted back, slowly turn your head towards the right side (3), so that you are now facing 45° to the right. Stay in this position for 30 seconds or until the dizziness stops, whichever is longer.

Keeping your head in the same position, roll your entire body over onto your right side without lifting your head, so that your eyes are now facing towards the floor(4). Stay in this position for 60 seconds or until the dizziness stops, whichever is longer.



Keeping your head tucked into your right shoulder, slowly sit up (5).
Straighten your head and try to remain in an upright position for the next 20 minutes.

Take your time when you stand up to ensure any dizziness has stopped.

Epley Manoeuvre for Right-sided BPPV:

Sitting comfortably in the middle of your bed, turn your head 45° to the right (1).

Keeping your head 45° to the right, lie down so that your head is hanging over the edge of the bed (2). It can be useful to have someone supporting your head. Alternatively, you may like to rest your shoulders on a pillow (as shown in the diagram below).

This may provoke some dizziness/vertigo. Stay in this position for at least 60 seconds or until the dizziness stops, whichever is longer.

Keeping your head tilted back, slowly turn your head towards the left side (3), so that you are now facing 45° to the left. Stay in this position for 30 seconds or until the dizziness stops, whichever is longer.

Keeping your head in the same position, roll your entire body over onto your left side without lifting your head, so that your eyes are now facing towards the floor(4). Stay in this position for 60 seconds or until the dizziness stops, whichever is longer.



Keeping your head tucked into your left shoulder, slowly sit up (5). Straighten your head and try to remain in an upright position for the next 20 minutes.

Take your time when you stand up to ensure any dizziness has stopped.