

## Understanding Dizziness, Vertigo & Imbalance

Hearing & Balance Clinic is excited announce our partnership with the American Institute of Balance (AIB), located in Largo, FL. AIB is one of the country's best-known diagnostic, treatment and educational facilities specializing in equilibrium disorders. The Institute is widely recognized for providing practitioners with the most current clinical and scientific breakthroughs in treatments. We are proud to announce that AIB has qualified us as a Center of Specialty Care!

### Did you know...

- According the National Institute of Health (NIH), dizziness or loss of balance will affect 90 million Americans sometime during their lifetime.
- Dizziness is the number one complaint reported to medical providers in adults 70 years of age or older.
- Balance-related falls account for more than one-half of accidental deaths in the elderly.
- Balance-related falls cause over 300,000 hip fractures in individuals over 65 years of age.
- Inner ear disorders or ear infections can result imbalance and vertigo affecting a person's ability to walk, roll over in bed, see or think clearly, or to read or watch television.
- Many times, disorders of the inner ear are misdiagnosed as a more severe neurological condition such as multiple sclerosis, or as clinical depression.
- Inner ear disturbances account for 85% of dizzy disorders.
- Children can also be affected by inner ear disorders and are sometimes incorrectly diagnosed as learning disabled, dyslexic, or psychologically disturbed.
- Illness, infections, disease, head injuries and whiplash are frequent causes of imbalance, dizziness, and vertigo.

### Balance and the Vestibular System

The medical term for the part of the inner ear involved with balance is called the vestibular system. The vestibular system is an organ located within the inner ear which relays information to the brain about balance and orientation of the head and body. Balance is a complex interaction which requires input from our vestibular system, in addition to our vision and the sensation from our feet, muscles, and joints. If any one of these systems are not working properly, you will suffer loss of balance.

### Balance Disorders

Balance disorders fall into two main categories:

- **The first is dizziness, vertigo, or motion intolerance.** This condition may be caused or worsened by rapid head movement, turning too quickly, walking, or riding in a car. These symptoms can be acute or sharp attacks lasting for seconds or sometimes for several hours.
- **The second is a persistent sense of imbalance or unsteadiness.** Some people refer to this as a loss of surefootedness. There can be many causes of dizziness and imbalance, with the largest percentage coming from the vestibular system.

A balance disorder may be caused by viral or bacterial infections in the ear, a head injury, or blood circulation disorders that affect the inner ear or brain. Many people experience problems with their sense of balance as they get older. Balance problems and dizziness also can result from taking certain medications. However, many balance disorders can begin all of a sudden and with no obvious cause. Your physician may have referred you to our clinic as the balance experts who will help in the process of determining possible causes and best treatment options.

### Neurodiagnostic Testing

The inner ear is home to the hearing and balance centers. The receptors within the ear allows signals to be received and processed by a variety of locations within the central nervous system and the brain. Unlike imaging studies which

show only the anatomy or structures, this family of tests allows your doctor to better understand how the system is working and where a problem may arise.

Depending on your condition, your physician may recommend evaluation of the hearing and/or balance centers as they are all part of the inner ear. All testing is easy, comfortable and use advanced technology.

*Find out if a vestibular and equilibrium evaluation should be considered. Take the Patient Self Quiz!*

## Patient Self Quiz

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Do you experience any of the following...?

1. A feeling of motion, spinning or falling when moving your head quickly or changing your position? (ex. getting in and out of bed)  
  
YES      NO
  
2. Uncomfortable trying to get around in the dark?  
  
YES      NO
  
3. Walking down the grocery store aisles or through the mall is upsetting?  
  
YES      NO
  
4. Your feet just won't go where you want them to?  
  
YES      NO
  
5. A sense of unsteadiness? A feeling you are not surefooted?  
  
YES      NO
  
6. A fear of falling or stumbling?  
  
YES      NO
  
7. Looking at moving objects such as escalators or looking out the side window of a car makes you queasy?  
  
YES      NO
  
8. Difficulty keeping your balance as you walk on different surfaces? (ex. Tile to carpet)  
  
YES      NO
  
9. A feeling like you are drifting or being pulled to one side when walking?  
  
YES      NO

10. No one really understands how frustrating this is?

YES      NO

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, a vestibular and equilibrium evaluation should be considered.  
To schedule an appointment contact us at **706-549-3111**.