



BPPV and Home Epley manoeuvre

QUICK FACTS

- Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo or BPPV causes sensation of spinning which lasts for seconds to a couple of minutes.
- BPPV is caused by trapped calcium crystals in the balance organs of the inner ears.
- The home Epley manoeuvre is a safe treatment for symptoms of BPPV.

ABOUT THE CONDITION

What is Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo?

The organ responsible for balance is located inside your ear. It consists of 3 semi-circular canals on each side which act like a gyro to detect motion.

In Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo or BPPV, calcium crystals can be dislodged from elsewhere and enter the balance organs. Turning the head can cause movement of these crystals. These interfere with signals sent to the brain which causes brief sensation of spinning or vertigo.

In most cases, the reason for developing BPPV is unknown. But it can occur if you've suffered a blow to the head or if you've had surgery in the ear.

ABOUT THE PROCEDURE

What is the Epley manoeuvre?

The Epley manoeuvre is a set of head movements which pushes these crystals out of the balance organs. This improves your sensation of spinning.

Why would I need to do the Epley manoeuvre?

You can have a one-off Epley manoeuvre in the clinic. You may not get an appointment on the day. Doing the Epley manoeuvre yourself at home regularly is a safe alternative for symptoms of BPPV.

What happens before the Epley manoeuvre?

They are best done on a bed as they can make you feel dizzy afterwards. Dress comfortably and have a pillow handy to place under your shoulders. This is to allow easier neck movements.

ABOUT THE RISKS

What are the risks of doing the Epley manoeuvre?

Whilst the Epley manoeuvre itself is quite safe, you may feel your spinning sensation or vertigo getting worse during the exercise. For this reason, you may find it reassuring to have someone with you in the room. You should also avoid driving while you still feel dizzy.

You may need to avoid using the Epley manoeuvre if you have certain problems with their neck, joints, heart, and eyes. Ask your doctor to confirm if the exercises are safe for you before doing them.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

What should I expect after the Epley manoeuvre?

Sit upright for the rest of the day and avoid sleeping on the affected side for the next few days. This is to prevent the calcium crystals from going back into the balance organ.

Half of people find their spinning sensation or vertigo improves after just one manoeuvre. Others may need to repeat these daily for a few weeks.

Will the Epley manoeuvre cure my BPPV?

Although the Epley manoeuvre is effective at treating vertigo from BPPV, there is still a chance the symptoms may return weeks or even years later. This can be due to another crystal getting trapped in the balance organs.

What if my symptoms don't improve?

If your symptoms don't improve after 4 weeks, please contact your doctor for a review.

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