

# Vestibular (Dizzy) Migraine

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## What is a vestibular or “dizzy” migraine?

A vestibular [veh-STIH-byoo-lahr] migraine is not just a type of headache. Instead, it can be spells of vertigo (the feeling of moving or spinning) or dizziness. Like with a regular migraine, these spells can last from seconds to minutes or even hours to days.

Vestibular migraines are caused by activity in the brain pathways that affect inner ear balance control. Activity in other brain pathways create migraine pain.

Vestibular migraines can happen for no reason. They often run in families. They can be triggered by regular migraine triggers such as certain foods, changes in sleep and hormones, unusual activity, or stress.

## What are the symptoms of vestibular migraine?

A vestibular migraine may not cause pain like a regular migraine does. It does cause symptoms like:

- Dizziness
- Spinning (vertigo)
- Lightheadedness
- Unsteadiness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Sensitivity to sound
- Motion sickness

Vestibular migraines are the second most common reason for vertigo.

## How does my doctor know I have vestibular migraine?

Your healthcare provider may ask if you have:

- Other types of migraines or migraine auras
- Sensitivity to lights, sounds, or smells
- Frequent nausea or vomiting

Your healthcare provider may ask you to complete vestibular or inner ear testing.

## How is vestibular migraine treated?

Your healthcare provider may prescribe medication to prevent your migraines and treat them after they begin. Non-prescription medications are also helpful. Besides medication, your healthcare provider may recommend:

- Vestibular therapy
- Cognitive behavioral therapy

## Where can I find more information?

- Vestibular Disorders Association (VeDA): [vestibular.org](https://www.vestibular.org)
- Vestibular Disorders Association (VeDA) fact sheet: [\*Vestibular Migraine\*](#)
- Vestibular Disorders Association (VeDA) fact sheet: [\*Persistent Postural-Perceptual Dizziness\*](#)

This education content was developed in partnership with the Department of Neurology at the University of Utah Health. Check out the [Dizzy School](#) for more information.

