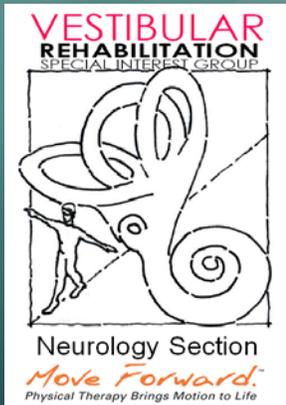


FACT SHEET



Labyrinthitis

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What is labyrinthitis?

Labyrinthitis (inflammation of the labyrinth of your inner ear) occurs when the nerve that goes to your inner ear gets infected by a virus or bacteria. Your doctor can often determine the cause of your infection, and the best medical treatment if it is seen early. Damage to the inner ear nerve affects your balance and hearing. When the nerve is damaged, you may have dizziness, vertigo (a sensation of spinning), poor balance, and changes in hearing.

Symptoms from damage to the inner ear can range from mild to severe. At the beginning (first 1-3 days), people may report that they feel like they are spinning, have difficulty focusing, have ringing in the ear or hearing loss, and also may complain of nausea and vomiting. Over time, vertigo may change into dizziness (mainly during fast head movements) and changes in balance. Symptoms can also start with dizziness and decreased balance.

What can I do about my labyrinthitis?

Recovery is gradual over several weeks, and physical therapy can help you get better faster. To use the information from your inner ears for balance, your brain needs both ears to work well with each other. If one side is not working well from an infection or damage to the nerve, your brain will need to learn how to interpret the information. Your physical therapist can give you exercises to help adjust for the changes to your inner ear. The exercises are very effective and it is normal to have dizziness while you are doing your exercises. Your physical therapist will create a special balance and exercise program specifically for you.



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