

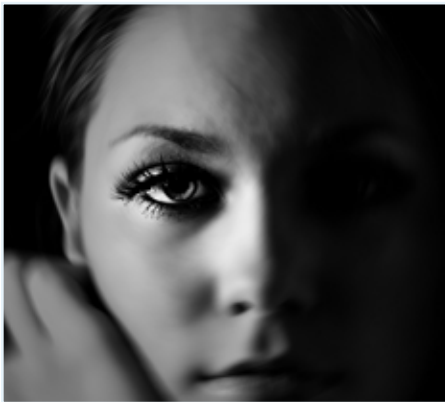
HEAD INJURY AND DIZZINESS

Concussion/Mild Traumatic Brain Injury

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Zachary Wolf



WHY AM I DIZZY?

Dizziness is one of the symptoms that you may experience after a concussion. During the week or two following a concussion, the vast majority of patients will recover from their dizziness and other associated symptoms.

There are several possible causes of your dizziness including:

- migraines
- a problem in your inner ear
- an injury to the muscles and nerves in your upper neck
- changes in the parts of your brain that control balance
- changes in the parts of your brain that control eye movement and vision
- a medication side effect
- low blood pressure
- anxiety

WHAT CAN I DO?

- maintain your daily routine
- be physically active but stop if you get dizzy
- minimize alcohol and caffeine
- drink plenty of water
- get plenty of sleep
- talk to your provider about medications and supplements you are taking
- discuss options for treatment with your provider
- keep a dizziness journal following the example below and share it with your provider

What is dizziness?

Dizziness may make you feel unsteady and like things are moving when they are not. Symptoms of dizziness may include:

- *feeling a false sense of motion (spinning, rocking or swaying)*
- *feeling unsteady, like you are losing your balance*
- *feeling hazy or like you are about to faint/pass out*

| What makes you dizzy (i.e., position, movement, activity)? | How long are you dizzy (i.e., seconds, hours)? | What makes you feel better? | Is there a certain time of day your dizziness is worse? |
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WHEN SHOULD I SEEK MORE HELP?

If you experience any of the following:

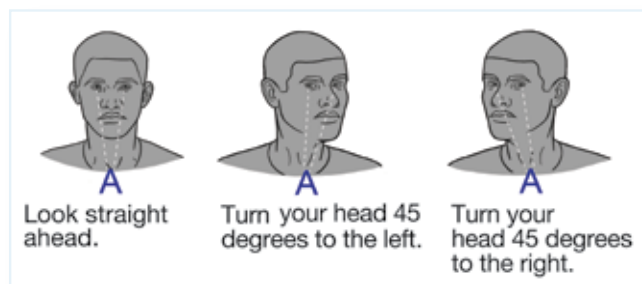
- worsening dizziness
- double vision or loss of vision
- weakness on one side of the body
- worsening headache
- dizziness and chest pains
- passing out and blackouts
- slurred speech or difficulty speaking
- drainage or bleeding from your ear
- dizziness caused by changes in pressure or sound
- suddenly losing hearing, or hearing that comes and goes

EXERCISES YOU CAN DO AT HOME

To help you feel better, your provider/therapist can teach you exercises to do at home. It is normal for your dizziness to get worse temporarily when starting exercises.

Before doing any type of exercise, make sure you are in a safe place in case you lose your balance.

- start by sitting down on a sofa or a bed
- once you are comfortable, you can try the exercises while standing next to a countertop or in a corner



FOCUS EXERCISES

Look at a letter or a word on the wall 3 feet away. Keep the target in focus as you slowly turn your head left and repeat by turning your head to the right at a comfortable speed. As your dizziness improves, you can move your head faster as long as you can keep the target clearly in focus.

STANDING BALANCE

Keep your balance with your feet together for 30 seconds. If this is too hard, start with your feet slightly apart. If you can do this, increase the challenge by continuing in the following order:

- standing with one foot in front of the other with eyes open
- standing on one foot with eyes open
- standing on both feet, closing your eyes
- turning your head right and left, or looking up and down with your eyes open

