



# Could you have a Vestibular Disorder?



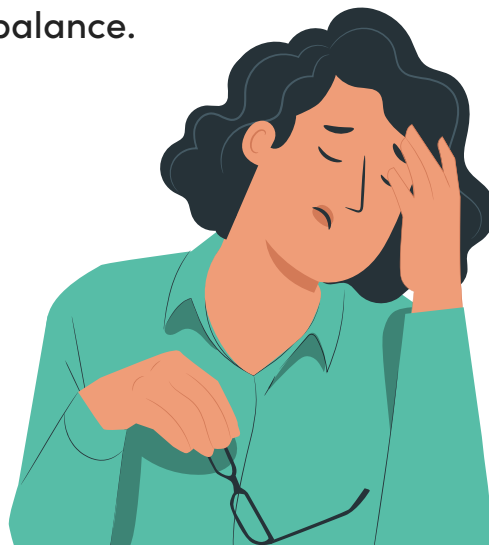
## What is the vestibular system and what does it do?

The vestibular system is a sensory system that is responsible for providing our brain with information about motion, head position, and spatial orientation; it also is involved with motor functions that allow us to keep our balance, stabilize our head and body during movement, and maintain posture. Thus, the vestibular system is essential for normal movement and equilibrium.

People are often of the belief that they suffer from a condition called “vertigo” which is in fact a symptom, not a diagnosis! People go undiagnosed for years, incorrectly thinking that their only choice is to live with it! Vestibular disorders affect balance and often produce disabling symptoms that include vertigo, dizziness, balance problems and difficulty concentrating. These life altering symptoms can deeply inhibit a person’s ability to perform basic day-to-day tasks, and are compounded by their invisibility to others, making it difficult to understand that a person with vestibular dysfunction is probably struggling to remain oriented and functional.

### The Problem:

35% of adults aged 40 years and older experience vestibular symptoms at some point in their lives. Dizziness is the number 1 reason people go to A & E. The symptoms can be mild and short lived or can have a more serious impact on one’s daily activities to the point of being debilitating. These occur as a result of disturbance in the vestibular system which includes the part of the inner ear and brain that controls balance.



Vestibular problems can occur due to:

- Ear infections
- Ageing
- Head trauma (car accidents, falls, impact sports, brain injuries)
- Disease
- Medication
- Unexplained causes

### **Treatment:**

Like any condition, an accurate diagnosis is most important. Functional Vestibular Testing using infra-red goggles is essential to identify the root cause of the problem. If a deficit shows up on assessment, Vestibular Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) will be appropriate for you.

### **Vestibular Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT):**

VRT can either be an exercise based programme personalised for each patient, to recalibrate their vestibular system or a series of vestibular manoeuvres, depending on their diagnosis.

