

Mass. Eye and Ear's Balance and Vestibular Center at Braintree Rehabilitation Hospital uses both clinical expertise and the most advanced computerized technology to provide a complete evaluation, diagnosis and treatment for dizziness and balance disorders.

## Diagnostic Testing

Vestibular testing is a way of measuring the performance of certain parts of the balance system. It is not a measure of your symptoms and you do not need to feel dizzy on the day of testing. The test battery is comprised of four parts:

**Rotary Chair Testing:** This test is conducted to help evaluate sensitivity of the inner ears to turning motion.

**Visual-Vestibular Interaction (VVI):** This test is given to see how well the central nervous system can combine multiple motion cues.

**Videonystagmography (VNG):** This test helps measure how well the eyes, inner ears and brain help to keep your balance and position.

**Computerized Posture Platform (EquiTest):** This test provides objective assessment of balance control and postural stability under conditions designed to reflect the challenges of daily life.



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Eye and Ear**  
Balance and Vestibular Center



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*Computerized Posture Platform  
(EquiTest)*



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## Balance and Vestibular Disorders

Millions of Americans suffer from dizziness. However, the word “dizzy” means different things to different people. The sensations can be very difficult to describe. People may use many different terms, such as imbalance, light headed, or dizzy, to describe the same feeling. Not all patients who use the word “dizzy” are referring to a balance problem. A careful and accurate description of the symptoms is critical to making a correct diagnosis.

### What Is Dizziness?

When dizziness is a symptom of a balance disorder, people may feel off balance or like they may fall. They may have a false sensation that they are moving or the world is moving about them. These sensations can be fleeting or prolonged and they can be mild or severe. They may arise from a wide range of health problems and can have a profound affect on a person’s mobility, independence, and quality of life. Experts believe that more than 40 percent of Americans seek medical care for dizziness. Even dizziness that seems minor may be an indication of a more serious health condition. Balance problems are among the most common reasons for older adults to seek help from a doctor.

Balance depends upon information from the inner ear, from vision, from muscles and joints, and upon the brain’s ability to properly receive and integrate all these balance messages.

Any breakdown in the complex system may cause a problem. Balance or vestibular problems are reported in about 9 percent of people over age 65 and can be a major cause of falls. Fall-related injuries, such as broken hip or concussion, are a leading cause of death and disability in seniors.

Balance problems are not confined to adults; children have them, too. Any child who complains of dizziness or imbalance should also be seen by a doctor. Balance disorders at any age may lead to secondary problems of fatigue, difficulty walking, loss of appetite, or loss of interest in everyday and leisure activities. If you or your child, parent, friend or co-worker has a balance problem, take it seriously. Talk to the doctor about what happens when you feel dizzy or lose your balance. Carefully describe your experience of dizziness – what it feels like, how long it lasts, what triggers it, anything that makes it better or worse.

### Patient Testimonial - *Lisa Tessier*



Lisa was suffering from migraine dizziness. Watch her video on YouTube and see how a Mass. Eye and Ear doctor treated her problem.

[YouTube.com/MassEyeAndEar](https://www.youtube.com/MassEyeAndEar)  
Search “Lisa”

Ask yourself the following questions. If you answer “yes” to any of these questions, you should discuss the symptom with your doctor.

- Do I feel unsteady?
- Do I feel as if the room is “spinning” around me?
- Do I feel as if I’m moving when I know I’m standing or sitting still?
- Do I lose my balance and fall?
- Do I feel as if I’m falling?
- Do I feel as if I might faint? (*sometimes people call this “lightheaded”*)
- Does my vision become blurred?
- Do I ever feel disoriented? (*lose my sense of time, place, identity*)

Balance disorders are serious. The most important thing you can do if you think you have a balance disorder is to see a doctor. Your doctor may refer you to an otolaryngologist, the doctor who specializes in the ear, nose, and throat. An otolaryngologist will try to find out why you have balance problems and may discuss treatment options.

### How can I help my doctor help me?

Write down a few things before your appointment. Describe your dizziness or balance problem as clearly as you can:

- How often do you have dizziness or balance problems?
- Have you ever fallen? Tell your doctor as much as you can.
- List all medicines you are taking.