



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Ménière's Disease: After Your Visit

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Ménière's (say "mun-YAIRZ") disease is a problem of the inner ear that affects hearing and balance. It causes sudden attacks of vertigo that make you feel like you are spinning. It can also cause a loud ringing in the ears called tinnitus, a temporary loss of hearing, and a feeling of fullness in the ear. Your hearing loss may not get better.

The cause of Ménière's disease is not known, but it may be related to a fluid imbalance in the inner ear. The goal of treatment is to make the vertigo less severe until the attack ends. Some people can prevent attacks by eating a diet low in sodium and by doing exercises to improve balance. Medicines may also help. Surgery is an option for some people.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- During an attack of vertigo, lie down and hold your head very still until the feeling passes. This may help you cope with vertigo.
- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine. You will get more details on the specific medicines your doctor prescribes.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, and stress, along with any other substances or conditions that trigger an attack.
- Eat a diet low in sodium to reduce fluid buildup in the inner ear.
- Do exercises to improve your balance. These can help ease vertigo.
 - Stand with your feet together, arms at your sides, and hold this position for 30 seconds.

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- For slightly harder exercise, stand with your feet together and arms at your sides while slowly moving your head up and down and side to side.
- Keep a chart to track your progress. It can make you aware of any improvements. Include the date, the time you spent exercising, how often your eyes were open or closed, and how you felt during each exercise.
- Walk 5 steps and then stop abruptly. Wait for any dizzy feeling to go away, and do it again. Repeat until you have walked about 50 feet. Walking exercises for vertigo may improve your balance and your symptoms of vertigo. You may want to have someone next to you while you do these exercises in case you lose your balance.
- For another walking exercise, walk 5 steps, turn, and walk back. Wait for any dizziness to go away. Repeat 5 more times.
- For harder exercise, walk and turn your head to the right or left with every other step. Try to walk about 50 feet. Repeat the exercise while moving your head up and down. Then repeat while moving your head up to one side and down to the other side, and then switching.
- Prepare a list that shows the distance you walked, how often you walked, and how you felt while you were walking.
- Make sure your home is safe for those times when you have an attack of vertigo.
 - Get rid of throw rugs, and use nonskid mats.
 - Use grab bars near the bathtub and toilet.
 - Use night-lights.
 - Keep floors dry to prevent slipping.
 - Store items you use often on low shelves so you do not have to climb or reach high. If you have to climb, use a step stool with handrails.
 - Keep driveways, sidewalks, and other walkways clear of things that might cause you to trip.
- There are other steps you can take to stay safe.
 - Avoid driving or working at heights.
 - Wear shoes with low heels and nonslip soles.
 - Keep your shoes tied.
 - Alert family and friends to your condition.

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- Know whether medicines you take can affect your sense of balance.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You have vertigo along with other symptoms. These include:
 - A headache, especially if you also have a stiff neck and a fever.
 - Sudden hearing loss.
 - Weakness in an arm or leg.
 - Blurred or double vision.
 - Difficulty speaking.
 - Numbness or tingling anywhere on your body that does not go away.
 - A recent head injury.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have an attack of vertigo that is different from those you have had before or from what your doctor told you to expect.
- You need medicine to control nausea and vomiting caused by severe vertigo.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You have frequent or severe attacks of vertigo that interfere with your normal activities.
- You do not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Enter Z422 in the search box to learn more about "**Ménière's Disease: After Your Visit**".

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