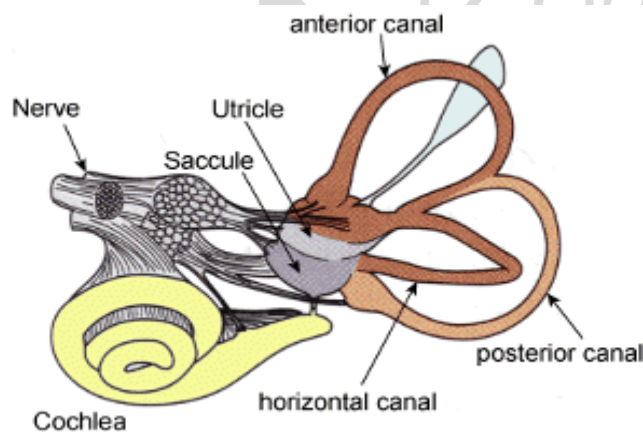


Dizziness and Balance

Many of us have experienced some type of dizziness or loss of balance in our lives. As children, we may have gone on a merry go round or spun until we were so dizzy we would have to grab something to stay upright or spread our feet apart to stabilize ourselves. Sports that require a rotation have us using different techniques to prevent us from falling. Sometimes driving in a car, riding on a boat, or taking a cruise can elicit the feeling of moving or even nausea. As we get older we may experience imbalance walking on an unfamiliar surface like uneven grass or rocky pathways/driveways. Our body is so great that our vestibular system allows for compensation within the different systems to regulate our upright posture in a variety of situations.

Our sensory motor control system maintains our balance. The information from various parts of our body sends information to our brain for interpretation and keeps us positioned appropriately for the situation we are experiencing. Our eyes will give us visual cues, in reference to objects, telling us which way is up or down, and how we are moving in relation to these object. For example, it can tell us if we are leaning in reference to everyday cues, such as a doorway or wall of a building. Our ears let us know our position in space, a 3D relationship to our surroundings. Our vestibular system consists of the semicircular canals, the utricle, and saccule. The semicircular canals send information regarding rotation while the utricle and saccule will send information of how we are moving against gravity (vertical orientation) and our linear movement.



Proprioception is the unconscious perception of our position in space based off information from our bodies. Our bodies send information from our muscles, joints, and skin. For example, "Proprioceptive cues from the neck indicate the direction in which the head is turned. Cues from the ankles indicate the body's movement or sway relative to both the standing surface (floor or ground) and the quality of that surface (for example, hard, soft, slippery, or uneven)."

Some techniques to assist in catching our balance are:

Spread your feet a little wider to increase your base of support.

Keep your eyes focused on something clearly within your field of vision, approximately 20 feet, in front of you,

If in a moving car or boat, focus your vision inside the vehicle, hold onto something steady, and place your feet solidly on the floor.

When dizzy, many people will close their eyes. Your eyes can help you to stabilize your gaze-focus on something stationary.

If you have symptoms with dizziness/vertigo, that don't resolve quickly or have persistent balance problems, we recommend that you contact your physician. There may be an underlying problem that we can help with your recovery..

For more information:

<http://vestibular.org/understanding-vestibular-disorder/human-balance-system>

<http://www.moveforwardpt.com/symptomsconditionsdetail.aspx?cid=85726fb6-14c4-4c16-9a4c-3736dceac9f0>

The health information contained herein is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace discussions with a healthcare provider. Decisions regarding patient care must be made with a healthcare provider, considering the unique characteristics of the patient.

INSTITUTE

Stone Oak Location

19260 Stone Oak Parkway, Suite 107, San Antonio, TX 78258
210.545.9355/fax 210.545.9369

Medical Center Location

5282 Medical Drive, Suite 550, San Antonio, TX 78229
210.593.0774/fax 210.593.0707

www.mypri.net