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Audiology and Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Departments

Patient Information

Meniere's Disease

Document history

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Contact number	01223 217593
Publish/Review date	January 2010/January 2012
File name	Meniere's_disease
Version number/Ref	1/PIN2553

What is Meniere's Disease (MD)?

Meniere's Disease (MD) is a particular condition causing dizziness. Typically, patients experience all of the following symptoms:

- Dizziness
- Hearing loss
- Tinnitus ("ringing" or other sounds in the ear)
- Fullness or pressure in the ear

Some patients also experience imbalance, sensitivity to loud sounds, distorted hearing, or "drop attacks."

What causes MD?

The underlying cause of MD is not known for certain. Different specialists have different theories of what has gone wrong in your inner ear to cause MD and what causes the typical symptom pattern. Most specialists think it is caused by an excessive build up of inner ear fluid.

How is MD diagnosed?

Most commonly, an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist is responsible for diagnosing MD or other conditions related to dizziness and/or imbalance. To diagnose MD they might use one or more of the following:

- Ask you to describe your symptoms
- Examine you in the ENT clinic
- Give you hearing tests
- Test you to assess your balance system
- Use electrocochleography tests

What treatment options are available for MD?

Diet

If you have been diagnosed with MD you are likely to be advised to reduce **caffeine and salt intake**.

Medication

Betahistine or **Serc** is the most commonly used medication and is often highly successful in managing symptoms. Some patients benefit from a medication such as **Buccastem** that is intended to reduce dizziness, nausea and/or vomiting during the severe attacks of MD only.

Physical or informational therapies

Vestibular rehabilitation exercises may be suitable for some patients. The patients suitable will be those who experience dizziness on particular head movements and/or constant imbalance, but who are **not** having frequent 'spontaneous' attacks of dizziness which are not provoked by head movements. Patients who are thought to have a disordered breathing pattern (hyperventilation syndrome) that is causing some of their symptoms of dizziness might also benefit from breathing control exercises.

Patients experiencing tinnitus, that is either preventing them from sleeping and/or is very bothersome, may benefit from an appointment in the **Tinnitus Clinic**.

Surgical procedures

Surgical procedures are considered only if other treatments have proved unsuccessful. Your ENT specialist will discuss the options with you if this becomes necessary.

Where do I find out more?

ENT - Nurse Practitioner, Tel: 01223 348672

Vestibular (Balance) Service - Clinical Audiologists, Tel: 01223 217797

Tinnitus Clinic - Clinical Audiologist, Tel: 01223 217797

The Meniere's Society. <http://www.menieres.org.uk/>.
Helpline telephone: 0845 120 2975