

## **Vestibular Rehabilitation Therapy**

### **What is Vestibular Rehabilitation Therapy?**

Vestibular rehabilitation therapy (VRT) is an exercise based program for reducing the symptoms of disequilibrium and dizziness associated with a vestibular pathology (disease or disorder). A common neuro-otological approach is to prescribe medications that suppress vestibular function, such as Stugeron. However, in the long-term, such suppressants will interfere with the person's ability to fully recover. In addition these medications cause drowsiness that may limit a person's ability to be fully functional. VRT is a treatment protocol involving specific exercises that can eliminate or significantly reduce symptoms by promoting central nervous system compensation for inner ear deficits.

### **What are the goals of VRT?**

The program is designed to achieve the following goals:

- Decrease dizziness and visual symptoms
- Increase balance and walking functions
- Increase general activity levels

### **What exercises are included in VRT?**

VRT programmes are personalised and vary according to the individual, the type of vestibular disorder and the associated symptoms. The program may include exercises for:

- Coordinating head and eye movements
- Stimulating the symptoms of dizziness in order to desensitise the vestibular system
- Improving balance and walking ability
- Improving fitness and endurance

## Who needs VRT?

It is critical that before starting VRT you have a full diagnostic balance and dizziness assessment in order to establish that you have a vestibular deficit. VRT can help people with:

- BPPV
- Unilateral or bilateral vestibular hypofunction (reduced inner ear function on one or both sides)
- Meniere's Disease
- Vestibular Neuritis
- Labyrinthitis
- Migraine
- Acoustic Neuromas
- Mal de Debarquement Syndrome
- Individuals at risk for falling

Even individuals with long-term unresolved inner ear disorders who have undergone a period of medical management with little or no success may benefit from VRT.

VRT can also help people with an acute or abrupt loss of vestibular function following surgery for vestibular problems.