

# The Epley

- Dr J

## Benign Positional Vertigo (BPV)

**BPV** is the most common cause of vertigo originating from the inner ear. It can affect male and female, young and old alike. BPV can be accurately diagnosed simply by talking to the patient and listening to their history. The suffering individual describes recurrent 'attacks of head-spinning' lasting for seconds and is typically triggered by a change of head positions such as looking up rapidly, rolling over in bed, or bending over. There are usually no associated symptoms of hearing loss or other problems.

**What Generates BPV?** Perhaps it is caused by organic debris (*canalith*) accumulating in sensitive parts of the inner ear after a cold or sudden temperature or climate change. The most frequently affected part is the posterior semicircular canal. When the patient steadies him/herself, some rebalancing takes place. This process may involve endolymphatic fluid, settling of

# Manoeuvre

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debris and recalibration of the sensory neurolymphatic signals traveling to the brain. However, a recurrent rapid movement will cause this canal or other canals to (over)respond again and a sensation of vertigo will return.

This is the most important aspect of the diagnosis. During the physical assessment, one tries to reproduce the symptoms by placing the head in a position that might provoke the vertigo. This is done so that the malfunctioning ear can be accurately identified and treated.

While most people with **BPV** will ultimately improve without any treatment, the **Epley Manoeuvre** has been shown in various trials to be an effective method to hasten the recovery and to return patients quickly to normal functioning.

