

MENIERE'S DISEASE



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Increased fluid in the inner ear's semicircular canals, which help maintain balance. Excess fluid produces pressure in the inner ear, disturbing balance and sometimes reducing hearing. In 80-85% of cases, only one ear is involved. Meniere's usually affects adults between ages 30 and 60 and is slightly more common in women than men.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The following occur with every acute attack:

- Severe dizziness.
- Vertigo (feeling that you are spinning or everything around you is spinning).
- Noises in the affected ear, such as ringing or buzzing.
- Hearing loss that increases with each attack.

Possible accompanying symptoms:

- Vomiting.
- Sweating.
- Jerky eye movements.
- Loss of balance.

CAUSES

The exact cause is unknown. Suggested causes involve an inner ear response to a variety of injuries. There is an increase in the amount of fluid in the membranous labyrinth (the canals in the inner ear that control balance).

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Stress.
- Allergy.
- Increased salt intake.
- Noise.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Avoid risk factors where possible.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Attacks of Meniere's disease usually recur over many years. Some symptoms can be controlled. The condition is frustrating but not life-threatening.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Permanent hearing loss.
- Chronic noises in the ear.



TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Diagnostic tests may include laboratory blood studies to rule out other disorders, various hearing tests, MRI to rule out acoustic tumor.
- Treatment usually consists of rest and medication to control the symptoms.
- Avoid glaring light and don't read during attacks.
- Surgical procedure on the affected labyrinth may be utilized in some patients with chronic Meniere's.

MEDICATIONS

- To treat an acute attack, intravenous atropine or diazepam, or scopolamine via a patch, may be prescribed.
- Antinausea drugs may be useful for some patients.
- Tranquilizers to reduce dizziness.
- Antihistamines, which lessen symptoms in some persons.
- Diuretics to decrease fluid in the inner ear.

ACTIVITY

- Rest quietly in bed until dizziness and nausea disappear.
- Don't walk without assistance.
- Avoid sudden changes in position.
- Don't drive, climb ladders or work around dangerous machinery.

DIET

- Decrease salt intake.
- Limit total intake during an attack because of nausea.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of Meniere's disease.
- The following occur during treatment:
 - Decreased hearing in either ear.
 - Persistent vomiting.
 - Convulsions.
 - Fainting.
 - Fever of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop. Drugs used in treatment may produce side effects.