

HOW TO LOCATE A QUALIFIED AUDIOLOGIST

All Members of the Audiological Society of Australia (ASA) are University Graduates bound by a Professional Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice and have access to postgraduate education programs. Look for the letters MAudSA (CCP) after the audiologist's name to ensure that you are consulting a qualified audiologist who has completed the ASA Certificate of Clinical Practice (CCP).

TO OBTAIN A FREE DIRECTORY OF CLINICS WHERE QUALIFIED AUDIOLOGISTS WORK VISIT:

www.audiology.asn.au

or contact us on
(03) 9416 4606



Audiological Society of Australia Inc. T/A
AUDIOLOGY AUSTRALIA

Suite 7, 476 Canterbury Road,
Forest Hill, VIC. 3131
Telephone: 03 9416 4606
Facsimile: 03 9416 4607

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AUDIOLOGY

and Balance Disorders



Your Hearing Health Professionals



WHAT IS VESTIBULAR?

Vestibular is a word that describes the balance function coming from your inner ears.

A vestibular disorder may be experienced as:

- vertigo
- veering to one side
- spinning
- dizziness
- seeing the world “bob” up and down when walking

This may happen without warning and cause embarrassment, with loss of independence and confidence sometimes leading to anxiety and depression. Assessment of inner ear function can assist in managing many balance disorders.

Normal balance depends on the brain receiving the right messages from three sensory systems:

- Inner ears (the vestibular system)
- Eyes
- Movement senses throughout the body

Many medical conditions that affect the above three sensory systems can be responsible for a balance disorder. It is important to thoroughly investigate the cause, as treatment and understanding of the condition may help the management of most people with balance disorders. You should consult your family doctor or specialist for appropriate management of the specific cause of your balance disorder.

HOW AUDIOLOGY CAN HELP

Audiologists are University Graduates with extensive specialist training at post graduate level in the non-medical management of hearing and balance disorders. For this reason balance disorders can be associated with hearing loss and tinnitus.

ASSESSMENT BY AN AUDIOLOGIST

Audiologists can help by performing tests of vestibular and hearing function. A person who has balance disturbance without obvious hearing problems may still be required to have hearing tests. Your medical specialist may refer you to an audiologist for balance function tests.

These may include:

ELECTRONYSTAGMOGRAPHY

Everyday eye movements are linked to your inner ear balance function. This test looks for any spontaneous eye movements generated by the vestibular system.

ROTATIONAL CHAIR

This measures the amount of activity in the vestibular system. It can assess how the systems on each side of the head work together as a whole.

CALORIC TESTS

The type and amount of activity in the left and right vestibular systems can be determined separately by creating temperature changes in the ear.

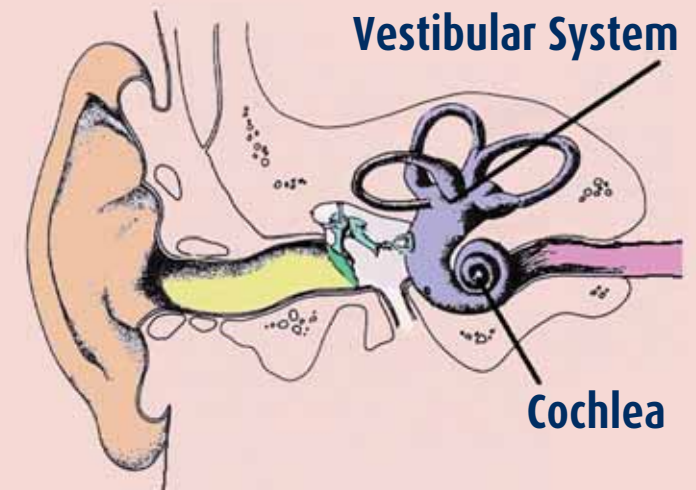
VESTIBULAR EVOKED POTENTIALS

This test records a balance reflex in the neck (one of many such reflexes in the body) that can be triggered when the vestibular system detects movement.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

In many cases management may be as simple as undertaking specific exercises involved in vestibular physiotherapy. Your medical specialist might recommend medications or diet changes to manage your balance disorder. Very rarely surgery is recommended. Psychological consultations and learning strategies to cope with a balance problem may also help.

THE INNER EAR



The inner ear consists of the following:

- **VESTIBULAR SYSTEM**, which responds to head movement and gravity
- **COCHLEA**, which responds to sound.