

## Travelling and dizziness

Frequent attacks of vertigo, or the uncertainty of when an attack might occur, may make you reluctant to travel. There are a few basic steps which can be taken to make travel a bit easier; whether you're travelling abroad or just going out to do the weekly shop. Travel may be a challenge but don't write it off, even if you just arrange to take a friend with you and go out for the day. You don't have to go far to enjoy yourself. If you find you enjoy a short trip out and about, hopefully you can go further next time.

- Stress and tiredness can exacerbate symptoms, so plan well ahead
- Travel with a friend, relative or colleague who understands and knows what to do in the event of an attack
- Plan the journey leaving plenty of time for connections. Include adequate rest periods when travelling – whether a comfort break or a whole day off
- Try relaxation techniques
- On a weekend trip or longer holiday have everything prepared a day or two before leaving so you can rest the day before you leave and get a good night's sleep
- Always pack a little more medication than you think you will need, especially the ones you only take during vertigo attacks. That way, if you are delayed for any length of time you won't be stuck without your regular medication. Sometimes, timetables and schedules change unexpectedly

### Walking

If you are uncertain about going out alone, start by going for short walks, keeping within a comfortably safe distance of home until you build up your confidence. Walk at your own speed and adjust your pace and step to maintain a comfortable balance while walking. Wear sensible, comfortable, low-heeled shoes or boots and use a bag to carry awkward items. If it helps use a walking stick. Folding walking sticks are available which can be put in a handbag or pocket when not in use. Walking poles are also becoming increasingly popular.

### By car

If you are affected by motion sickness, you may wish to keep some of your medication and sealable plastic bags to hand. The flicker of strong sunlight through shaded trees, or the ripple of fencing or posts flashing past can trigger dizziness. Some motoring organisations under their recovery scheme will recover you and your car if you are on your own and taken ill away from home. Check with your motoring organisation if they offer this service. Driving and the law: There are legal obligations which apply to those who suffer from, or develop, sudden attacks of unprovoked or unprecipitated disabling giddiness and you are required by law to inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), as well as the company which insure any vehicle you drive of your condition if you wish to continue driving. Visit the GOV.UK website for information on vertigo and driving.

## Travelling by bus, train or underground

When travelling by bus or coach always sit down if you can to help you keep your balance. When a vehicle starts and stops it can be difficult and remain downstairs on a double decker if you are unsteady. If motion bothers you, particularly when using the underground, be careful getting on and off escalators and keep your eyes in front.

## Flying

Most people have no difficulty at all with flying and many people report feeling better for the experience. If you're in doubt about a vertigo attack get an aisle seat; it's away from the view, which could be disorienting and easier to get to the toilets. If noise and vibration are likely to trouble you arrange to have a seat away from the engines. When you book your flight, notify the airline of your condition. Ask if the airline has special diets. Knowing you can eat well in the air will reduce the stress of flying and so reduce the risk of an attack. Once in flight keep your fluid intake up. The air in aircraft is very dry because it is air conditioned, and you will dehydrate to some degree but avoid drinking alcohol in flight as this adds to the risk of dehydration. If your main problem when flying is severe ear pain, it is not related to your Meniere's but is caused by a difference in the pressure in the middle ear and the cabin.

## Sailing

Some people find just thinking about the motion of a boat or ship almost brings on nausea, others very much enjoy sailing. Consider the length of the trip and the likely sea conditions. Try a short trip first before you arrange a long cruise. Once at sea you might find it less disturbing to stay below deck with a book and avoid the visual effect of seeing the horizon appear to move. If you suffer from sea sickness, try to keep your fluid levels up by drinking water. Being sick lowers your fluid levels significantly.

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