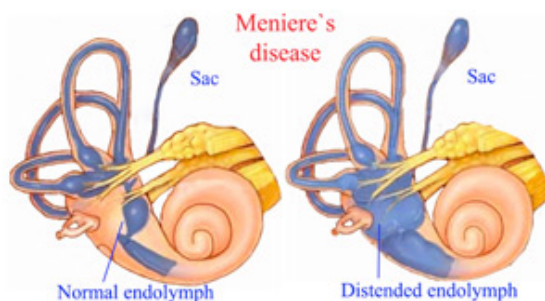


### **What is unilateral vestibular loss or hypofunction?**

A diagnosis of unilateral vestibular loss or hypofunction is made when the balance system in the inner ear is not working properly. There is a vestibular system in each ear, so this means that only one system is impaired. The vestibular system helps you to know where you are in space and controls eye and head coordination. Common causes may be a viral or bacterial infection in the ear, weakness of inner ear structures due to aging, toxic reaction to medications, blood clots, tumors, or brain injury. Symptoms may include dizziness, vertigo, poor balance, trouble walking in dark rooms or crowded places, and blurred vision.



### **What is bilateral vestibular loss or hypofunction?**

Bilateral vestibular loss refers to damage in both vestibular systems. When this occurs, there is less information from the inner ears going to the brain and the brain becomes dependent on information from other sources such as your eyes and feet on the floor. Common causes include toxic medications to the inner ear as well as possible Meniere's disease, acoustic neuroma, Paget's disease, and congenital abnormalities. Symptoms may include loss of balance, difficulty walking, unsteadiness in the dark, and a bouncing sensation.

### **What can be done about my symptoms related to vestibular loss?**

Physical Therapy will not restore inner ear function but helps the brain to reorganize information to maintain balance. Gaze stability exercises help to coordinate head and eye movements. By emphasizing the use of other senses, patients can compensate for their loss of vestibular input with a strengthened sense of vision and body sense.