

VERTIGO

Does this patient have CENTRAL vertigo?

Vertigo vs. Lightheadedness

- **Vertigo:** When a person feels as if they or the objects around them are moving when they are not. It often feels like a spinning motion. May be associated with nausea/vomiting. Commonly an ear/nerve complaint
- **Lightheadedness:** a feeling that one may faint. Sometimes you feel woozy when you stand up too fast. Commonly a cardiovascular complaint

Approach to Vertigo

1. Is the **description** typical of CENTRAL vertigo?

Central Vertigo: mild, vague, non-specific

Peripheral Vertigo: Severe, sudden, lots of nausea/vomiting

2. Are the **associated symptoms** typical for CENTRAL vertigo?

(The Dangerous D's)

a. Diplopia: double vision

b. Dysphagia: trouble swallowing

c. Dysmetria: difficulty moving/walking

d. Dysarthria: difficulty speaking

3. Does this patient have **risk factors** associated with CENTRAL vertigo?

Risk factors for stroke (old age)/trauma (recent MVA/fall)

4. Is the **neuro exam** consistent with CENTRAL vertigo?

5. **Treat**

a. Signs of Central: MRI, CT of Head/neck

b. Signs of Peripheral: Meclizine

References

Go S. Acute Vertigo. In: Cydulka RK, Cline DM, Ma O, Fitch MT, Joing S, Wang VJ. eds. Tintinalli's Emergency Medicine Manual, 8e. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill; 2016. <http://accessemergencymedicine.mhmedical.com/content.aspx?bookid=1759&Sectionid=126711964>. Accessed December 20, 2016.