

# NW London - dizziness guidelines

## Red flags – cardiology

- Cardiac arrhythmia
- Structural heart disease
  - Abnormal ECG
  - Family history sudden death
  - Known structural heart disease
  - Known coronary vascular disease
  - Blackouts when lying
  - Dizziness/syncope during exercise



## Red flags - neurology

Refer red flag cases immediately

- Stroke
  - Acute continuous vertigo
  - Falls & ataxia
  - New headache
  - Abrupt deafness +/- vertigo
  - Focal neurology including e.g. numbers, dysarthria



## Dizziness (in absence of red flags)

### GP – Detailed History to Include

- Single or recurrent
- Situation and triggers
- Witness account – pallor; duration; recovery.
- Patient account – premonitory symptoms, recall.
- Recovery / confusion >10mins (**witness account key**), consider seizure & neurology referral.

### GP Investigations

- Blood pressure - lying and standing
- Medication review
- Hallpike test:
  - [Hallpike \(diagnosis\) + Semont \(treatment\)](#)
  - [Hallpike \(diagnosis\) + Epley \(treatment\)](#)
  - [Comparing Semont vs. Epley \(Audio\)](#)

## BPPV (Benign Paroxysmal Postural Vertigo)

### Diagnosis

- Dizziness turning over in bed?
- Hallpike test - positive

### Management

- Epley or semont manoeuvre
- Leaflet and advice given to the patient including Brandt Daroff exercises

## Syncope

### Diagnosis

- History
- Drop  $\geq 20$ mm Hg BP on standing from lying (lying, **feet up for 2 minutes**).

### Management

- Lifestyle advice
- Medication review

## Vestibular migraine

### Diagnosis

- Active migraine?
- Does dizziness sometimes occur with migraine features?

### Management

- Refer to NW London migraine treatment guidelines

## Who and when to refer

### Neurology

- If BPPV, migraine & syncope excluded (i.e. no clear diagnosis).
- BPPV & migraine not responding.
- Prolonged post-event recovery.

### Cardiology

- Syncope not responding despite medication review, and lifestyle change.

Neurology/cardiology refer to balance clinic for further expert input as needed.