

LET'S TALK ABOUT . . .

Health Professionals Who Can Help You Deal With Balance and Dizziness Disorders



BC BALANCE & DIZZINESS
DISORDERS SOCIETY

In addition to your general practitioner (GP or family doctor), the following BC health professionals diagnose, assess, treat and/or help people cope with vestibular disorders —their fees are covered by the Medical Services Plan (MSP) unless otherwise noted.



Otolaryngologists

Commonly known as ENTs, otolaryngologists are doctors who specialize in problems of the ear, nose, throat, and neck. They are excellent at diagnosing common vestibular disorders.

Some ENTs, however, have other subspecialty interests and infrequently assess vestibular disorders – ask before making an appointment.

A referral from a general practitioner or another specialist is required to book an appointment.

To find an otolaryngologist:

Contact BADD or search the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC database — www.cpsbc.ca

Neuro-otologists

These highly specialized otolaryngologists have done extensive additional studies in the sub-specialty of Otolaryngology and Neuro-otology. They are the experts in diagnosing and treating complex conditions that affect parts of the brain and the central nervous system that are associated with the hearing and balance organs in the inner ear. Neuro-otologist services are best reserved for complex patients who ENTs and neurologists are struggling to diagnose and treat.

A referral is required to book an appointment — most restrict their practice to referrals from ENT, Neurology,

and Neurosurgery.

To find a neuro-otologist:

Contact BADD or search the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC database - www.cpsbc.ca

Neurologists

Neurologists are specialists in diseases and disorders of the brain and central nervous system, including migraine. Those with expertise in the sensory and motor control systems of the brain can be particularly helpful in assessing balance problems related to the brain. Some neurologists, however, have other sub-specialty interests and rarely treat vestibular disorders or migraine, so ask before making an appointment.

A referral from a general practitioner or another specialist is required to book an appointment.

To find a neurologist:

Contact BADD or search the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC database — www.cpsbc.ca

Neuro-ophthalmologists

These specialist eye doctors focus on vision problems related to the nervous system, including the optic nerve and visual pathways. They are extensively trained in both the field of Ophthalmology and Neurology.

A referral from another specialist is required to book an appointment.

To find a neuro-ophthalmologist:

Contact BADD or browse the Canadian Neuro-ophthalmology Group directory — www.neuroophthalmology.ca

Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists

Some physiotherapists and occupational therapists have post-graduate certification in assessing and treating many balance and vestibular disorders, including benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV). Speak to the therapist to find out if they have completed additional training in vestibular disorders and what type of vestibular conditions they have experience treating.

Physiotherapists and occupational therapists provide vestibular evaluations and treatment, which often includes prescribing home exercises and providing advice on living with dizziness and imbalance.

No referral is required to book an appointment. Fees are

SUPPORTING, INSPIRING AND EDUCATING THOSE AFFECTED BY BALANCE AND DIZZINESS DISORDERS

not covered by MSP.

To find a physiotherapist :

Contact BADD or search the Physiotherapy Association of BC database - www.bcpphysio.org

To find an occupational therapist:

Contact BADD

Audiologists

Audiologists are hearing health professionals. A small number have an advanced competency certificate in vestibular assessment and management.

A referral from an otolaryngologist (ENT) is required to book an appointment with a hospital-based audiologist — their fees are covered by MSP.

There are a number of private audiologists that can be accessed without a referral — their fees are not covered by MSP. Audiologists in private practice do not usually do vestibular assessments; they more often provide hearing tests and hearing aid fittings.

To find an audiologist:

Contact BADD or search the College of Speech and Hearing Professionals in BC registry — www.cshhpbcc.org

Developmental Optometrists

People who have balance and dizziness problems may also have vision problems such as double vision and difficulty moving their eyes to read. These and other vision problems may be helped by a developmental optometrist. Also known as behavioural optometrists, these highly specialized doctors of optometry have completed advanced studies in providing developmental and behavioural vision care for patients.

Developmental optometrists are certified as Fellow of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (FCOVD).

No referral is required to book an appointment. A portion of the first appointment is covered by MSP.

To find a developmental optometrist:

Contact BADD or search the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD) website — www.covd.org

Mental Health Professionals

The symptoms of some dizziness disorders can be distressing and upsetting. As a consequence, many people with chronic conditions experience dizziness-related depression and/or anxiety.

If you suspect you might be depressed, checking in with your family doctor is a good place to start.

If you or someone you know is having recurring thoughts of suicide, it is very important to get help right away. **For immediate help 24/7, phone the BC Crisis Centre at 1-800-784-2433.**

Non-emergency professional help with dizziness-related depression, anxiety and the stress of living with a chronic condition can be sought from psychiatrists, psychologists

or registered clinical counsellors.

Psychiatrists

These medical doctors have specialized training including the diagnosis and treatment of anxiety and depression through psychotherapy and medication.

A referral from a general practitioner or another specialist is required to book an appointment.

To find a psychiatrist:

Contact BADD or search the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC database — www.cpsbc.ca

Psychologists

Registered psychologists have a doctorate degree in psychology. As they are not medical doctors, they do not treat using medications.

No referral is required to book an appointment. MSP generally does not cover the services of psychologists in private practice. There may be a number of options for funding and reimbursement — contact the BC Psychological Association (BCPA) for information.

To find a psychologist:

Call the BCPA Referral Line at 604-730-0522 or 1-800-730-0522 (toll-free long distance).

Registered Clinical Counsellors

Registered clinical counsellors (RCC) have a range of backgrounds and may have master's or doctoral level degrees from counselling programs.

No referral is required to book an appointment. Fees are not covered by MSP, however some workplaces offer access to counselling through benefit programs and extended health coverage.

To find a RCC:

Contact BADD or search the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors directory — bc-counsellors.org

This is one in a series of information sheets reviewed by vestibular specialists for the **BC Balance and Dizziness Disorders Society (BADD)**.

CONTACT US:

Website: www.balanceanddizziness.org

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