

+ What is Ménière's Disease?

Over 615,000 individuals in the United States have Ménière's Disease.

1. Introduction

Ménière's disease is a chronic disorder of the inner ear that affects balance and hearing, causing episodes of vertigo, hearing loss, tinnitus and a feeling of fullness or pressure in the ear. It most often affects only one ear and appears in adults between the ages of 40 and 60, though it can occur at any age. Symptoms usually come on suddenly and may recur unpredictably, sometimes becoming severe enough to disrupt balance and daily activities. While Ménière's disease has no cure, treatment can help manage symptoms and reduce long-term impact on quality of life.

2. Causes

The exact cause of Ménière's disease is unknown, but experts believe it is linked to a buildup of fluid in the inner ear that disrupts balance and hearing signals. This excess fluid may be caused by poor drainage due to blockages or abnormal ear anatomy, as well as conditions such as infections, allergies, head injuries, or migraine-related blood vessel changes. Autoimmune reactions and viral infections have also been suggested as contributing factors, and genetics may play a role in some cases.

3. Symptoms

Ménière's disease symptoms include:

- + Vertigo
- + Hearing loss
- + Tinnitus (ringing in the ear)
- + Pressure in the ear
- + Nausea and vomiting can result from the above symptoms

4. Treatment

Treatment for Ménière's disease focuses on reducing the severity and frequency of symptoms, as there is currently no cure. Management typically begins with conservative options such as lifestyle and dietary changes, including a low-sodium diet, limiting caffeine and alcohol, managing stress, and taking medications to control fluid levels and dizziness. If symptoms persist, additional options may include steroid or gentamicin injections, vestibular rehabilitation therapy, hearing devices, or cognitive behavioral therapy to address balance issues and emotional impact. In severe cases, surgical procedures may be considered.

Did you know?

About 45,500 new cases are diagnosed every year.

For more information on Ménière's Disease, please visit american-hearing.org.

References:

<https://www.american-hearing.org/disease/menieres-disease/>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/menieres-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20374910>

<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/menieres-disease>

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