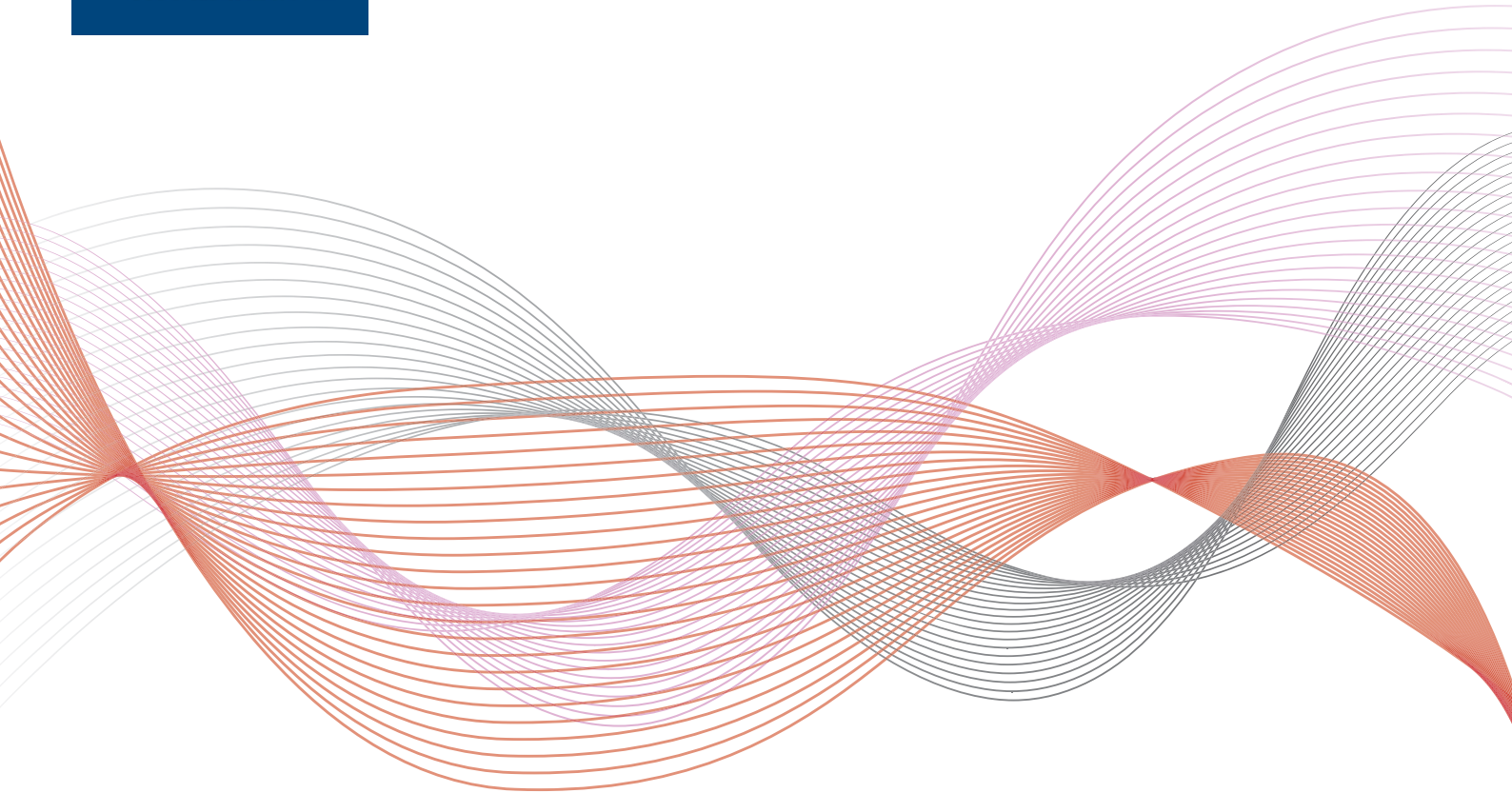




Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences

Melbourne Audiology & Speech Pathology Clinic



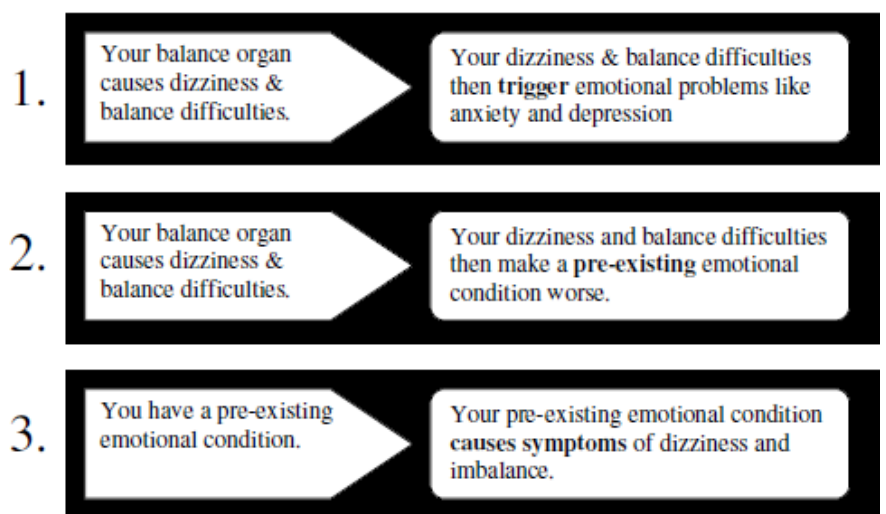
Dizziness and Stress

Dizziness, imbalance and vertigo can be caused by a number of different conditions including vestibular dysfunction (poor functioning inner ear balance system), low blood pressure and certain medications.

This is why your doctor or specialist will refer you for tests to find out the cause. One element that is equally important is your emotional wellbeing as these symptoms can be made worse, or even be caused by our emotional state¹.

Most people who experience dizziness, imbalance or vertigo also experience unpleasant emotions such as, fear, panic, anxiety, stress, frustration, embarrassment or anger.

Research suggests that there are 3 common ways dizziness can be linked to your emotional state :



Some symptoms linked to unpleasant emotional responses include:

- Vague, persistent sensations of dizziness
- Light headedness
- Sweating
- Increased heart rate
- Nausea
- Trembling or shaking

“WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE DIZZINESS SYMPTOMS CAUSED BY EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS?”

Undergo the health tests recommended by your medical practitioner.

Learning that the symptoms are not caused by a serious illness can help reduce stress. Balance problems are often complex and may involve seeing many specialists such as a Neurologist, Ear Nose and Throat Specialist, Audiologist, Physiotherapist, and Psychologist.

Develop new ways to cope with stress by:

- Finding time to relax by doing something you enjoy (eg reading a book or going for a walk)
- Talking to a friend or family member about things that worry you
- Playing with a pet
- Listening to your favourite music
- Writing down the things that worry you

Remain active.

Exercise can help your balance system correct for the unwanted dizziness symptoms. Research has also shown that exercise causes endorphins to be released into your body and this helps you to feel healthier and happier. Try regular exercise, such as walking.

If you are unable to manage this on your own, often a referral to a vestibular physiotherapist will be helpful. Vestibular physiotherapy can help your dizziness symptoms to habituate by using a graded exercise programme. This specialised physiotherapy will also help improve your balance. We can provide you with a list of vestibular physiotherapy services.

Breathe.

During dizziness episodes sit down and make a conscious effort to take some deep, slow breathes. This may help you to relax until the episode passes.

See a health psychologist.

A health psychologist can help develop ways to identify emotional symptoms that may be related to your health issues.

Visit <http://www.psychology.org.au/community/specialist/health/> for information about health psychologists. You can locate a health psychologist close to you by calling the Australian Psychological Society Referral Service on 1800 333 497 or by emailing referral@psychology.org.au

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¹ Staab, J. P., & Ruckenstein, M. J. (2003). Which comes first? Psychogenic dizziness versus otogenic anxiety. *The Laryngoscope*, 113(10), 1714-1718.