# Dizziness/Vertigo Referral Guideline

**SYMPTOMS AND LABS**
- Acute spontaneous, non-positional vertigo with inability to walk and brainstem deficits (e.g. dysphagia, dysarthria, diplopia, unilateral incoordination, unilateral weakness or numbness), mechanism or symptoms to suggest vertebral dissection (e.g. neck/eye pain; rapid, repeated or prolonged hyperextension of neck)

**EXAM:**
- Non-fatigable nystagmus, ataxia, CN palsies

**SUGGESTED PREVISIT WORKUP**
- Urgent ED evaluation for possible cerebellar or brainstem stroke

**SUGGESTED EMERGENT CONSULTATION**

**HIGH RISK**

**MODERATE RISK**

**LOW RISK**

**SYMPTOMS AND LABS**
- Dizziness with headache/migraine

**EXAM:**
- Generally normal exam

**SUGGESTED CONSULTATION OR CO-MANAGEMENT**
- Non-urgent neurology consultation

**SUGGESTED MANAGEMENT**
- If pre-syncope, consider cardiology evaluation and discontinue any causative medications.
- If suspect BPPV or Meniere's, consider ENT evaluation.
- If chronic dizziness not responsive to therapies, consider neuro-otology referral to Mass Eye and Ear.
- If acoustic neuroma, MRI w/ and w/o gad and neurosurgery consultation

**SUGGESTED EMERGENT CONSULTATION**

**SUGGESTED CONSULTATION OR CO-MANAGEMENT**

**SUGGESTED ROUTINE CARE**

**SYMPTOMS AND LABS**
- Pre-syncope without peripheral neuropathy; benign positional vertigo, medication side effects, hyperventilation syndrome, Meniere's disease, acoustic neuroma (hearing loss, tinnitus)

**EXAM:**
- Orthostasis, fatigable and provoked nystagmus (if BPPV)

**SUGGESTED PREVISIT WORKUP**

**SUGGESTED WORKUP**

**SUGGESTED MANAGEMENT**

**CLINICAL PEARLS**
- Etiology of dizziness in population based studies include:
  - 40% peripheral vestibulopathy
  - 25% other (e.g. syncope, disequilibrium, medication side effects, TBI, hypoglycemia, vision/hearing/sensory loss)
  - 15% psychiatric
  - 10% central brainstem/vestibular lesion
  - 10% undetermined

- If suspect benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) due to provoked, brief vertigo and nystagmus, consider ENT evaluation and vestibular therapy.

---

These clinical practice guidelines describe generally recommended evidence-based interventions for the evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of specific diseases or conditions. The guidelines are: (i) not considered to be entirely inclusive or exclusive of all methods of reasonable care that can obtain or produce the same results, and are not a statement of the standard of medical care; (ii) based on information available at the time and may not reflect the most current evidenced-based literature available at subsequent times; and (iii) not intended to substitute for the independent professional judgment of the responsible clinician(s). No set of guidelines can address the individual variation among patients or their unique needs, nor the combination of resources available to a particular community, provider or healthcare professional. Deviations from clinical practice guidelines thus may be appropriate based upon the specific patient circumstances.

Reviewed by Megan Selvitelli, MD