

# Vestibular Neuritis — What You Need to Know

Understanding your condition and your recovery journey.

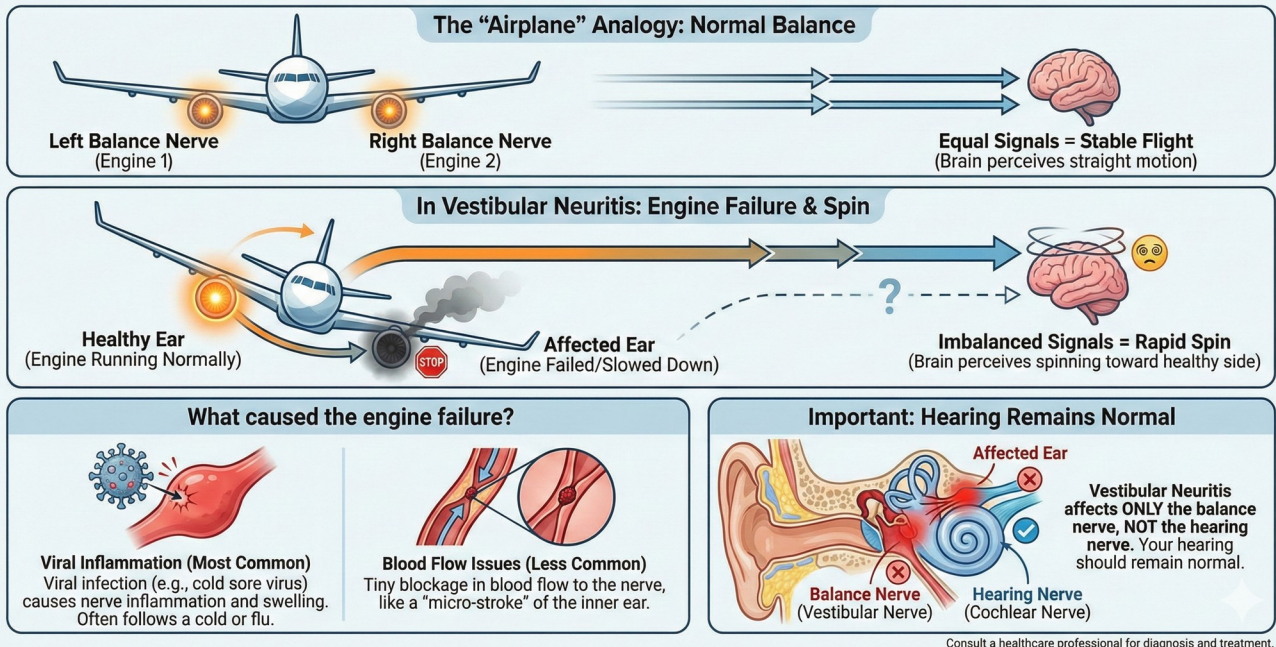
## What is Vestibular Neuritis?

Vestibular neuritis is inflammation of the balance nerve in your inner ear — usually caused by a viral infection (similar to the cold sore virus). It is NOT a stroke, NOT a brain tumour, and NOT dangerous.

Your body has two balance nerves — one in each ear — that constantly send equal signals to your brain. Think of it like two engines on a plane flying in perfect sync. When one engine fails suddenly, the plane tilts and feels like it's spinning uncontrollably. That is exactly what vestibular neuritis feels like.

The good news: your brain can — and will — learn to compensate. But it needs your help.

## Why is This Happening? The Airplane Analogy for Vestibular Neuritis



## ► The 3 Phases of Recovery — What to Expect

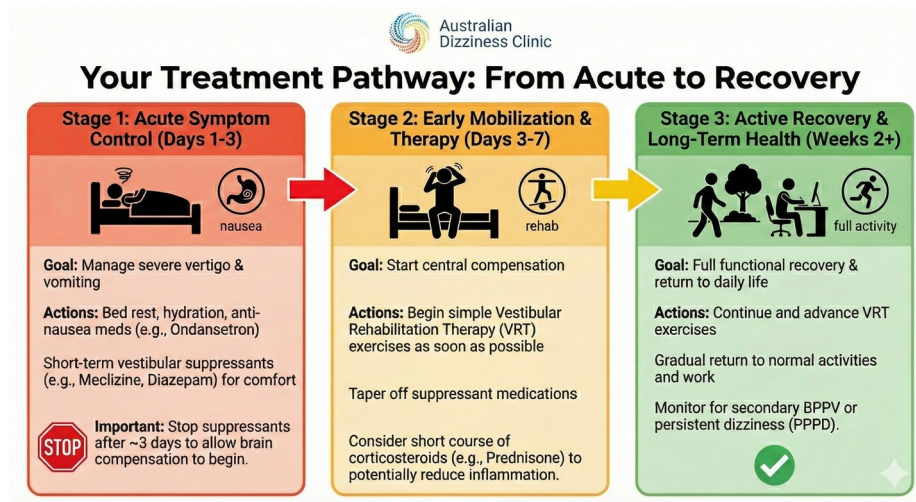
| Phase                                     | How you feel   | What's happening  |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Days 1–3</b><br><b>Acute</b>           | Severe spinning, nausea, vomiting. Unable to stand without support.            | One balance nerve has 'switched off'. Your brain is overwhelmed by the sudden signal mismatch.                |
| <b>Days 4–14</b><br><b>Compensation</b>   | Spinning improves but dizziness worsens with movement. Walking feels unsteady. | Your brain is actively learning to ignore the silent nerve and rebalance using the other ear + vision + legs. |
| <b>Weeks to Months</b><br><b>Recovery</b> | Return to most activities. May feel 'foggy' in busy or dark places.            | Final fine-tuning. VRT speeds this up. Patience is key — full recovery can take 2–3 months.                   |

► Your Recovery Action Plan

| ✓ DO — Things that speed recovery   | ✗ DON'T — Things that slow recovery   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start gentle head movements within 24–48 h of the worst vomiting.</li> <li>Walk with support as soon as you can — even a few steps helps.</li> <li>Keep moving through mild dizziness — it teaches your brain to adapt.</li> <li>Attend vestibular rehabilitation therapy (VRT) sessions.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay in bed for more than 1–2 days — this delays recovery.</li> <li>Use vestibular suppressants (Stemetil, Valium) beyond 3 days.</li> <li>Avoid all movement out of fear — the brain needs input to retrain.</li> <li>Drive while you have active vertigo or are on sedating medication.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drink water or electrolyte drinks if you have been vomiting.</li> <li>Remove trip hazards at home; use a cane in the first week.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ignore new symptoms like sudden hearing loss or double vision.</li> <li>Expect overnight recovery — allow 2–3 months for full adaptation.</li> </ul>   |

► Your Medications — What They Do and When to Stop

| Medication                       | Purpose  | Important rule   |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Stemetil / Valium (suppressants) | Reduce spinning and nausea in the first 1–3 days.          | STOP after 3 days maximum. Longer use blocks brain retraining. |
| Prednisone / steroids            | Reduce nerve inflammation to help faster caloric recovery. | Take the full course as prescribed — usually 3 weeks tapering. |
| Betahistine (if prescribed)      | May improve blood flow to the inner ear during recovery.   | Take regularly with food; safe for long-term use if needed.    |



☐ Go to Emergency if You Have:

- Double vision, slurred speech, or difficulty swallowing — suggests stroke.
- Sudden hearing loss in one ear — needs urgent investigation.
- Unable to stand at all (even with support) after several days.
- Severe new headache unlike anything before.
- Symptoms getting significantly WORSE after day 3–4.

☐ Your Outlook — The Good News

- Most patients feel significantly better within 1–2 weeks.
- Full recovery occurs in ~83% of patients at 12 months.
- Recurrence is rare — less than 2–7% chance this will happen again.
- Some mild unsteadiness in dark or busy places is normal for a few months.
- Trust your brain's ability to adapt. Keep moving and you will recover.