

Alternative Answers for Meniere's Disease: Five-Step Treatment Protocol

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Meniere's disease is a disorder characterized by recurrent vertigo, dizziness, loss or diminished acuity of normal sounds, tinnitus, and often, a feeling of fullness in the ear. Tinnitus (ringing or buzzing in one or both ears) may be either intermittent or constant, and may be worse before, during or after an attack of dizziness.

Vertigo can come on suddenly or occur when we change levels from standing or sitting to moving quickly or lying down. The symptoms are sometimes accompanied by nausea, dizziness and vomiting. The term *endolymphatic hydrops* is often used synonymously with Meniere's disease.

The known triggers of Meniere's disease can be set off by certain stresses, emotional upset, overworking, salt consumption and fatigue.

1. Acupuncture

A case study published in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* found acupuncture helped to alleviate vertigo symptoms. In this study, four acupuncture sessions were conducted every other day and then one week later. Significant improvement was shown after the first session. Vertigo symptoms ceased after the second session. Six months later, the patient remained symptom free. The main points used in this protocol were as follows:

Governor Vessel (DU 20) The Hundred Meetings, is located at the top of the head, in line with the tips of the ears. Among other things, you can use this point for a headache, to clear your mind because of overthinking, to increase memory, and counteract depression and dizziness.

Small Intestine (SI 19) Auditory Palace, is located in front of the ear, anterior to the tragus and posterior to the condyloid process of the mandible, in a depression formed when the mouth is opened. It is indicated for inflammation, deafness, tinnitus, hearing loss, TMJ, and toothache.

San Jiao or Triple Heater (SJ 17) Wind Screen, is located behind the ear, posterior to the ear lobe in the depression between the mandible and mastoid process. It is indicated for Bell's palsy, ear problems, tinnitus, deafness, acute earache due to wind cold.

Pericardium (PC6) Inner Pass is on the inside of the wrist, two (cun) finger widths above the wrist crease between the tendons of palmaris longus and flexor carpi radialis. It is indicated for the chest, chest tightness, asthma, angina, palpitations, insomnia, spirit disorders of an excess or deficient nature, mania, nervousness, stress, poor memory, nausea, sea sickness, motion sickness, vomiting, epigastric pain, and carpal tunnel syndrome.

Stomach (ST 36) Leg Three Li, is located on the outside of the leg, three finger widths below the anterior border (head) of the tibia bone. It is indicated for low immunity, chronic illness, poor digestion, general weakness, all issues involving the stomach, breast problems, lower leg pain,

asthma, wheezing, dyspnea, psychological/emotional disorders, PMS, depression, nervousness, and insomnia.

2. Incorporating Massage

Deep-tissue massage focusing on the stretching and massaging of the neck is associated with significant improvements in tinnitus, according to a study published in the *Journal of Manipulative Physiological Therapeutics*. In addition to deep-tissue massage, craniosacral therapy, and lymphatic drainage massage may help to increase circulation and reduce fluid buildup.

Consider massaging all of the above acupuncture points, working from the legs and moving upward.

3. Herbal Options

The Western medicine approach to treating Meniere's disease often involves giving anticholinergic drugs, such as scopolamine and atropine, in over-the-counter preparations. Valerian root capsules (120-200mg) for relaxation or (300-500mg) for sleep can often be a better option. This is also non-habit-forming.

Before recommending any herbal supplementation, be cautious of the fact that certain Western drugs for Meniere's disease can cause problems if mixed with herbs, especially *gingko biloba*. As such, be sure patients take herbal supplements either two hours before or two hours after any Western prescribed medications in order to avoid any side effects.

- *Dandelion in tea form* is one of best herbal diuretics and can be an important part of a healing regime for Meniere's disease. Recommend at least two cups a day, morning and evening.
- *Ginger root* is exceptional for treating symptoms of nausea.
- *Gingko biloba* is an herb known for resolving the symptoms of vertigo. It works by managing blood flow to the brain to relieve dizziness and balance issues. A study reported in the *International Journal of Otolaryngology* suggests ginkgo biloba is just as effective as the medication Betahistine in managing vertigo.
- *Hydrogen peroxide* or mineral (or baby) oil can be a remedy for fullness, pressure in the ear or dizziness if the ear is impacted with wax. Recommend using an eyedropper with full-strength hydrogen peroxide; tilt the head to one side and put several drops in the affected ear a few times a week.
- *Lipase*, an enzyme, has been shown to be deficient in most patients with Meniere's disease. The standard dose for adults is 6,000 lipase activity units (LU). These are taken in one to two capsules, three times a day. Ideally, they should be taken on an empty stomach, 30 minutes before meals.

4. Diet Restrictions

Certain foods have shown to act as triggers for vertigo, dizziness, tinnitus or fullness in the ear. For example:

Caffeine, chocolate and alcohol can aggravate symptoms for some patients with Meniere's disease. For those with tinnitus, caffeine, even in small amounts, may make tinnitus louder.

Salt: reducing the amount of salt in your diet will reduce the fluid collecting in the ear.

High-sugar foods and beverages. This includes fruit juices, sodas, desserts and snacks. Sugar can cause fluctuations in the volume of bodily fluids, increasing symptoms.

5. Specific Exercises

Exercise increases blood flow and circulation. Here are a few specific ones that work well for Meniere's patients:

Cawthorne-Cooksey eye exercise: This exercise involves head and eye movements. Patient instructions: Do these exercises seated or lying down. Sit in a chair or lie face-up on a bed or the floor. Look up toward your forehead and then look down toward your nose. Look all the way to the left and then look all the way to the right. Finally, hold one finger up, at bent-arm's length away from your face. Focus on it and straighten the arm in front of your face, as you continue to keep it in focus. Repeat for the desired number of repetitions.

Head movement exercise: This involves tilting the head side to side. Patient instructions: Sit upright in a chair, looking straight ahead. Tilt your chin down toward your chest. Next, tilt your head back to look at the ceiling. Go slowly and keep your eyes open. You can add speed or close your eyes once the head-tilting exercise makes you less dizzy. Next, turn to look over your right shoulder and then turn your head to look over your left shoulder. Do these head-turning exercises slowly and then gradually speed up, progressing from eyes open to eyes closed.

Resources

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