



# DIZZINESS AND BALANCE



Government of South Australia  
SA Health

## Staying steady on your feet

Do you often feel dizzy? Being steady and safe is important for keeping your balance and staying independent.

There are many reasons why people feel dizzy. Doctors can work out the causes, and dizziness can be easily treated in many cases.

### What is dizziness?

Dizziness is a word used to describe feeling faint or lightheaded, weak, woozy or unsteady. Dizziness that makes you feel like the world is spinning or moving is called vertigo.

### What can you do?

Rather than risk a fall, talk to your doctor or health professional about your dizziness. In the meantime:

- > change positions slowly, and wait until you are balanced before walking
- > avoid quick or sudden turns
- > if you do suddenly feel dizzy, stop what you are doing and sit down if able, until it passes
- > make sure you are drinking enough fluid (not including alcohol) – at least 6 large cups (250ml / 8 fluid ounces) a day unless your doctor says something different
- > be careful when you bend your head back, or look up
- > consider using a walking aid – ask a physiotherapist about the best type to suit you.





## Some types of dizziness are a sign of a serious medical condition.

Seek urgent medical help if dizziness is associated with:

- > pain, pressure, heaviness or tightness in the chest, shoulders, neck, arms, jaw, or back
- > feeling sick, cold sweat, shortness of breath
- > feeling numb or weak in the face, arm or leg
- > trouble talking, understanding or swallowing
- > blurred or poor vision in one or both eyes
- > loss of balance or unexplained falls
- > confusion or becoming unconscious.

(National Stroke Foundation 2009 and National Heart Foundation of Australia 2010)

## Who can help?

- > **Emergencies** call 000
- > Talk with your **doctor** about any concerns you have about dizziness or balance. Your doctor can refer you to other health professionals or any services you may be eligible for.
- > **Neurological physiotherapists** specialise in treating dizziness.
- > To find a physiotherapist (no referral needed) near you, phone the **Australian Physiotherapy Association** on 1300 306 622 – (toll free) or **Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre**: phone 1800 052 222 (toll free)
- > Pharmacists – talk with your pharmacist about any concerns about medicines.

## For more information

**Adelaide area:** Call 1300 0 FALLS (1300 0 32557) for information about falls prevention services that are close to you.

**Country SA:** Please contact your local health service for information about services close to you. You can also email the Country Health Falls Prevention coordinator at [Health.CHSAFallsPreventionProject@sa.gov.au](mailto:Health.CHSAFallsPreventionProject@sa.gov.au)

[sahealth.sa.gov.au/falls](https://sahealth.sa.gov.au/falls)

Public I1-A1



This document has been reviewed and endorsed by SA Health PwC&CAG\* for consumers and the community, March 2015.

\*SA Health Partnering with Consumers and Community Advisory Group



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses>

