

CENTRAL OHIO EAR, NOSE AND THROAT, INC.

41 COMMERCE PARK DR.
WESTERVILLE, OH 43082

6860 PERIMETER DR. SUITE A
DUBLIN, OH 43016

HYDROPS & MENIERE'S DIET SUGGESTIONS

The fluid-filled hearing and balance structures of the inner ear normally function independent of the body's overall fluid/blood system. In a normal inner ear, the fluid is maintained at a constant volume and contains specific concentrations of sodium, potassium chloride, and other electrolytes. This fluid bathes the sensory cells of the inner ear and allows them to function normally.

With injury or degeneration of the inner ear structures, independent control may be lost, and the volume and concentration of the inner ear fluid fluctuate with changes in the body's fluid/blood. This fluctuation causes the symptoms of hydrops-pressure or fullness in the ears, tinnitus (ringing in the ears), hearing loss, dizziness and imbalance.

DIET AND DIZZINESS:

Your inner ear fluid is influenced by certain substances in your blood and other body fluids. For instance, when you eat foods that are high in salt or sugar, your blood level concentration of salt or sugar increases, and this, in turn, will affect the concentration of substances in your inner ear.

People with certain balance disorders must control the amount of sugar and salt that is added to food. You must also become aware of the hidden salts and sugars that food contains. Limiting or eliminating your use of caffeine and alcohol will also help reduce symptoms of dizziness and ringing in the ears.

DIETARY GOALS:

The overall goal is to provide stable body fluid/blood levels so that secondary fluctuations in inner ear fluid can be avoided. To achieve this goal, take the following steps:

- 1) Distribute your food and fluid intake evenly throughout the day and from day to day. Eat approximately the same amount of food at each meal, and do not skip meals. If you eat snacks, have them at regular times.
- 2) Avoid taking in foods or fluids that have a high salt or sugar content. High salt or sugar levels in the diet result in fluctuations in the inner ear fluid pressure and may increase your symptoms. Aim for a diet high in fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and low in canned, frozen, or processed foods. Try to maintain a diet of less than 2000 mg of salt or sodium per day.
- 3) Drink adequate amounts of fluid daily. This should include water, milk, low sugar fruit juices (for example, cranberry). Coffee, tea and soft drinks should not be counted as part of this intake. Try to anticipate fluid loss that will occur with exercise or heat, and replace these fluids before they are lost.
- 4) Avoid caffeine-containing fluids and foods (such as coffee, tea and chocolate). Caffeine is a diuretic that causes excessive urinary loss of fluids. Caffeine also has stimulant properties that may make your symptoms worse.
- 5) Limit or eliminate your alcohol intake. Alcohol can affect the inner ear directly, changing the volume and concentration of the inner ear fluid and increasing symptoms.
- 6) Avoid foods containing MSG (monosodium glutamate). This is often present in pre-packaged food products and in Chinese food. It may increase symptoms in some patients.

DRUG CONSIDERATIONS:

- 1) Avoid aspirin and medications that contain aspirin. These can increase tinnitus and dizziness.
- 2) Avoid caffeine-containing medications.
- 3) Pay attention to the content of all over-the-counter medications as well as drugs prescribed by physicians for other problems. Some may increase your symptoms.
- 4) Avoid cigarettes. The nicotine present in cigarettes constricts the blood supply to the inner ear, making your symptoms worse.

INFORMATIONAL WEBSITES ON MENIERE'S DISEASE:

<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/balance/meniere.asp>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/menieres-disease/DS00535>

<http://www.menieres.org/>

<http://www.dizziness-and-balance.com/disorders/menieres/menieres.html>