

## UPPER CERVICAL TREATMENT PROVIDES FREEDOM FROM CHRONIC VERTIGO

*by Erin L Elster, D.C.*

What causes chronic dizziness and vertigo? It's been difficult to pinpoint the exact reason(s) why certain people suffer from vertigo; however, research is beginning to point toward upper cervical (neck) trauma as an underlying cause for many types of chronic vertigo disorders, including Meniere's disease, Labyrinthitis, Disembarkment Syndrome, Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV), and Cervicogenic Vertigo.

The upper cervical area of the spine refers to the two vertebrae located at the top of the spine, directly underneath the head. These vertebrae are extremely vulnerable to injury through trauma, such as blows to the head, whiplash, auto and sports accidents, and falls. If these upper cervical vertebrae become displaced, even slightly, chronic dizziness and vertigo can occur. Unless the neck injury is addressed, the symptoms persist.

Upper Cervical Chiropractic care involves correcting the position of these injured cervical vertebrae. Realigning these vertebrae may reduce or eliminate many types of vertigo. Debbie, age 51, suffered with one to two vertigo episodes per month for an entire decade after she injured her neck in an auto accident. She described her benefits from upper cervical care. "Doctors diagnosed me with labyrinthitis and prescribed decongestants and anti-nausea medications which I took for ten years," she said. "After my first upper cervical adjustment, I stopped taking the decongestants and the dizziness never returned."

There are several types of vertigo for which people seek upper cervical chiropractic treatment. Patients with BPPV experience dizziness that is triggered by specific changes in the position of the head and neck, such as tipping the head up or down, lying down, turning over or sitting up in bed. Meniere's disease patients suffer from attacks of vertigo along with fluctuating hearing loss, ringing in the ear (tinnitus), and sometimes a feeling of fullness or pressure in the ear. Those with Disembarkment Syndrome suffer from the illusion of movement felt as an after effect of travel by ship, boat, train, or plane. Patients with Labyrinthitis have vertigo with inner ear involvement that sometimes includes ringing in the ear (tinnitus), hearing loss and a feeling of fullness or pressure in the ear. Finally, Cervicogenic Vertigo patients feel dizziness accompanied by neck pain.

Many chronic vertigo disorders are successfully treated with Upper Cervical Chiropractic care. The number of treatments required varies by individual, and is determined by factors such as age, severity of the cervical injury, and also the type and frequency of vertigo. A first visit to an Upper Cervical Chiropractor usually involves a spinal exam and diagnostic tests, including infrared imaging and cervical x-rays, to determine whether a cervical injury is present and whether benefit from treatment can be achieved. From there, the practitioner will determine a plan for treatment. Many patients notice an improvement in symptoms after just a few treatments.

*Dr. Erin Elster is an Upper Cervical Chiropractor who has successfully treated over 150 patients with chronic vertigo disorders. Her published vertigo research is available on her website: [www.erinelster.com](http://www.erinelster.com). For more information, please contact Dr. Elster in Kahului at (808) 866-6551 or [erin@erinelster.com](mailto:erin@erinelster.com).*