

BALANCE CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE DEFINITIONS

How To Use This Guide:

Balance Centers of Excellence serve people with vestibular dysfunction by supporting them through all stages of their journey, from diagnosis to treatment. The definitions below represent the centers primarily focused on vestibular care. This is not inclusive of all individual healthcare providers who diagnose, test, and treat vestibular disorders. See VeDA's [vestibular healthcare provider specialty definitions](#) and [guidelines for how to choose a vestibular healthcare specialist](#).

COMPREHENSIVE BALANCE CENTER

All balance team members are located within the same facility. The goal of a comprehensive program is to identify, manage and treat patients with balance, mobility and dizziness disorders, offering a coordinated and multidisciplinary approach. In addition to providing a full range of services, comprehensive programs attract referrals from other primary care and rehabilitation providers.

Staffing

In-house fellowship trained neurotologist, otolaryngologist, otoneurologist, headache neurologist, vestibular trained psychiatrist, vestibular trained physical therapist, vestibular trained audiologist.

Process

- Multidisciplinary team with vestibular specialty-trained staff within the center.
- Medical doctor takes the lead on providing a diagnosis and medical and/or surgical care as indicated
- On staff audiologist performs testing
- On staff physical therapist provides rehabilitation therapy

Services/Treatments

- Full range: medical assessment and treatment, audiological and balance testing, surgery, rehabilitation therapy, and lifestyle changes
- Medical: transtympanic steroid injection, transtympanic gentamicin injection, suppressant/preventive medication
- Surgical: acoustic neuroma resection, superior semicircular canal plugging for dehiscence, endolymphatic sac surgery, labyrinthectomy, mastoid surgery for cholesteatoma, vestibular nerve section
- Rehabilitation: Vestibular rehabilitation therapy, particle repositioning, balance retraining therapy, habituation therapy, fall prevention

Other

Ongoing research in clinicians' field of interest

Equipment/Testing

VNG with ENG capability, caloric irrigator (water or water & air), Rotation VOR testing, DVA (dynamic visual acuity)/GST (gaze stabilization test), computerized dynamic posturography (CDP), total body rotational chair, vHIT (video head impulse test), c-VEMP, o-VEMP, video ocular counter roll



BALANCE TESTING CENTER

The primary focus is diagnostic assessment, using an established outside referral network for rehabilitation and specialized treatment. Includes state of the art diagnostic services combined with objective assessments of underlying balance impairments.

Staffing

- In-house vestibular trained audiologist
- Other specialists accessed through established relationships with key practitioners, including neurotologist, neurologist, psychiatrist/psychologist, physical therapist, and others as necessary

Process

- Medical doctor provides referral and post-testing assessment to determine a diagnosis
- On-site audiologist performs testing
- Patients returned to referring physician or to physical therapist and other allied providers for rehabilitation, counseling, lifestyle management, and other treatment
- Multidisciplinary team with vestibular specialty training accessed through referral network

Services

Full range of audiological vestibular diagnostic services. Treatment for hearing loss and tinnitus. Other medical, surgical, and rehabilitation services provided through established relationships with local specialists.

Other

Limited or none

Equipment/Testing

VNG with ENG capability, total body rotational chair, CDP, vHIT, c-VEMP, o-VEMP, DVA/GST

VESTIBULAR DISORDERS ASSOCIATION



BALANCE REHABILITATION CENTER

Vestibular rehabilitation services are the primary focus of this clinic. Vestibular rehabilitation programs may receive referrals from diagnostic programs. Similarly, vestibular rehabilitation programs will refer to outside services for comprehensive assessment as needed, especially when a patient arrives without a medical diagnosis or the provider determines that additional assessment is needed to establish the cause of the patient's signs and symptoms.

Staffing

Physical therapists (PTs) and occupational therapists (OTs) with vestibular training. Neurotologist, otolaryngologist, neurologist, audiologist, and psychologist available through referral networks.

Process

PTs develop individualized treatment plans based on the patient's signs, symptoms, functional limitations, lifestyle and personal goals, with the aim of decreasing their symptoms and maximizing their ability to function. PTs will refer patients to a more comprehensive center if they require further investigation, or refer back to their family physician if other medical (non-vestibular) work-up is deemed appropriate. The referring physician is contacted to report progress and results. If a patient self-refers or arrives without a medical diagnosis, PTs perform a comprehensive evaluation to determine if treatment is appropriate or whether the patient should be referred to another healthcare provider.

Services

- Balance and other tests to determine functional impairments
- Canalith repositioning or liberatory maneuvers, vestibular rehabilitation exercises, fall prevention, balance training, treatment of orthopedic contributors to dizziness or imbalance, education on management of vestibular conditions/symptoms.
- Habituation exercises, balance and gait training, compensation and adaptation strategies, exercises for gaze stability, manual therapy to cervical spine and paravertebral musculature.

Equipment/Testing

Cranial nerve, cerebellar and cervical-spine scans, CDP (computerized dynamic posturography), CTSIB and dynamic balance/fall-risk testing, infrared video goggles, clinical or computerized dynamic visual acuity test, post-rotary nystagmus, DVA/GST

Research

Limited/none