

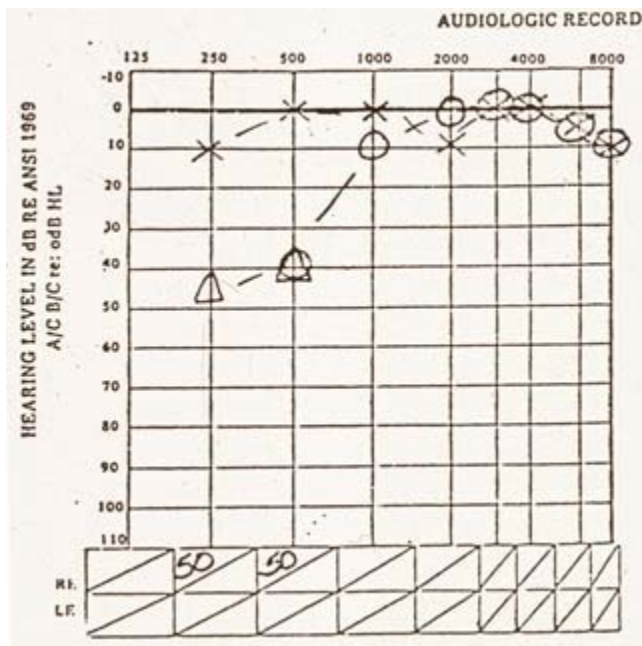
Meniere's Disease

What is Meniere's Disease?

Meniere's Disease, also known as Endolymphatic Hydrops, is an inner ear disorder that is caused by an overproduction or underproduction of endolymphatic fluid found within the cochlea or inner ear. As the endolymphatic ducts change, there is a change of pressure in the inner ear. The increased pressure can break through the membranes to the inner ear and cause an abnormality in the chemical make-up of the fluid.

What are the symptoms of Meniere's Disease?

As a result of the pressure changes of the inner ear, fluctuating low frequency hearing loss occurs, which can become permanent and worsen over time. Because the hearing loss occurs more in the low frequencies, it becomes difficult for people to hear low pitched sounds. Overtime, the hearing loss becomes gradually worse and may affect other frequencies. Other symptoms of Meniere's Disease include roaring tinnitus, sudden and spontaneous vertigo (dizziness), and pressure changes in the ears. Meniere's disease can attack one or both ears at the same time.



What causes Meniere's Disease?

The exact cause of Meniere's Disease is unknown, however there several factors that may contribute to it. These include:

- *Hereditary/Genetics
- *Autoimmune Disorder such as Rheumatoid Arthritis and Lupus
- *Viruses such as Herpes
- *Head Injury including a head concussion
- *Allergy
- *Certain food products including salt and caffeine

How is Meniere's Disease diagnosed?

An Audiologist/ Practitioner can suspect Meniere's Disease based on a patient's case history and a complete audiological assessment including middle ear function, stapedial reflexes, pure tone air and bone conduction, and speech discrimination scores. However, further testing by an Ear-Nose and Throat (ENT) Specialist is necessary to confirm this diagnosis. An ENT Doctor may perform several tests including an MRI scan.

Treatments for Meniere's Disease?

- *Gentamycin: A steroid injection applied across the eardrum to the inner ear to help resolve some of the symptoms. Diuretics and suppressants may also be prescribed to reduce the pressure fluctuation.
- *Modification to ones' diet including reducing salt and caffeine intake.
- *Endolymphatic sac decompression/shunts may be used to relieve some of the pressure in the inner ear.

*Hearing Aids will help to improve audibility and localization of sounds in one's every day listening situations.

*Labyrinthectomy, removal of the inner ear, and a Chemical Labyrinthectomy, a drug used to destroy the vestibular (balance) system, may be recommended however only as a last resort.

Leilya Bahbahani, R.Aud
Clinical Audiologist