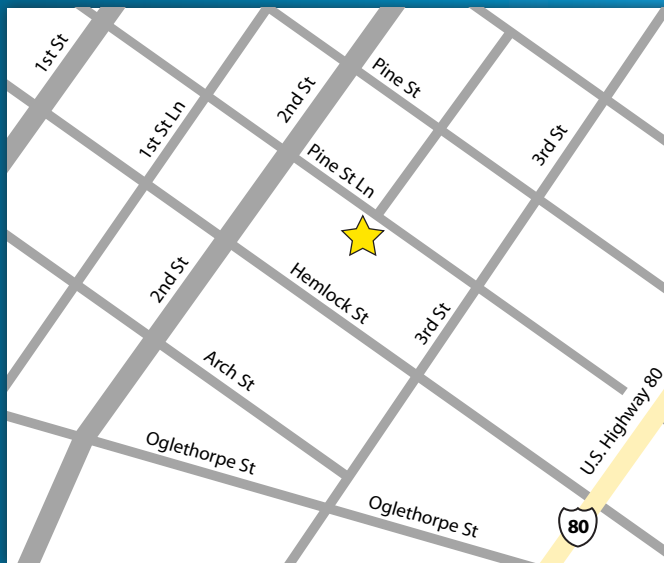




### About the ENT Center of Central Georgia

The ENT Center of Central Georgia brings together the very best physicians and support staff dedicated to providing you an exceptional patient experience. In our pursuit to provide excellence in medical treatment, we listen to our patients and focus on their symptoms. We develop individualized treatment plans based on your unique needs and treat you like we would a family member. Whether you have hearing problems, allergies, dizziness, sinus infections, snoring, or any other ear, nose, and throat related problem, we can help.

**For more information, contact one of the elite health care professionals at The ENT Center of Central Georgia today: 1-800-253-8953**

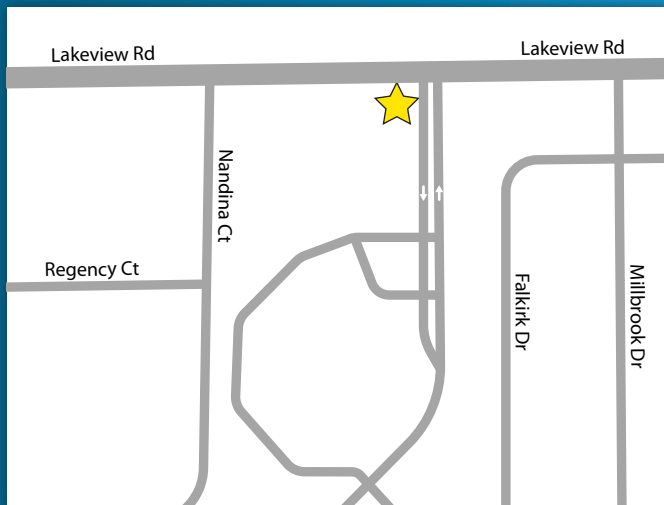


#### Macon Office

540 Hemlock Street  
Macon, GA 31201

Phone: (478) 743-8953

Fax: (478) 743-1963



#### Warner Robins Office

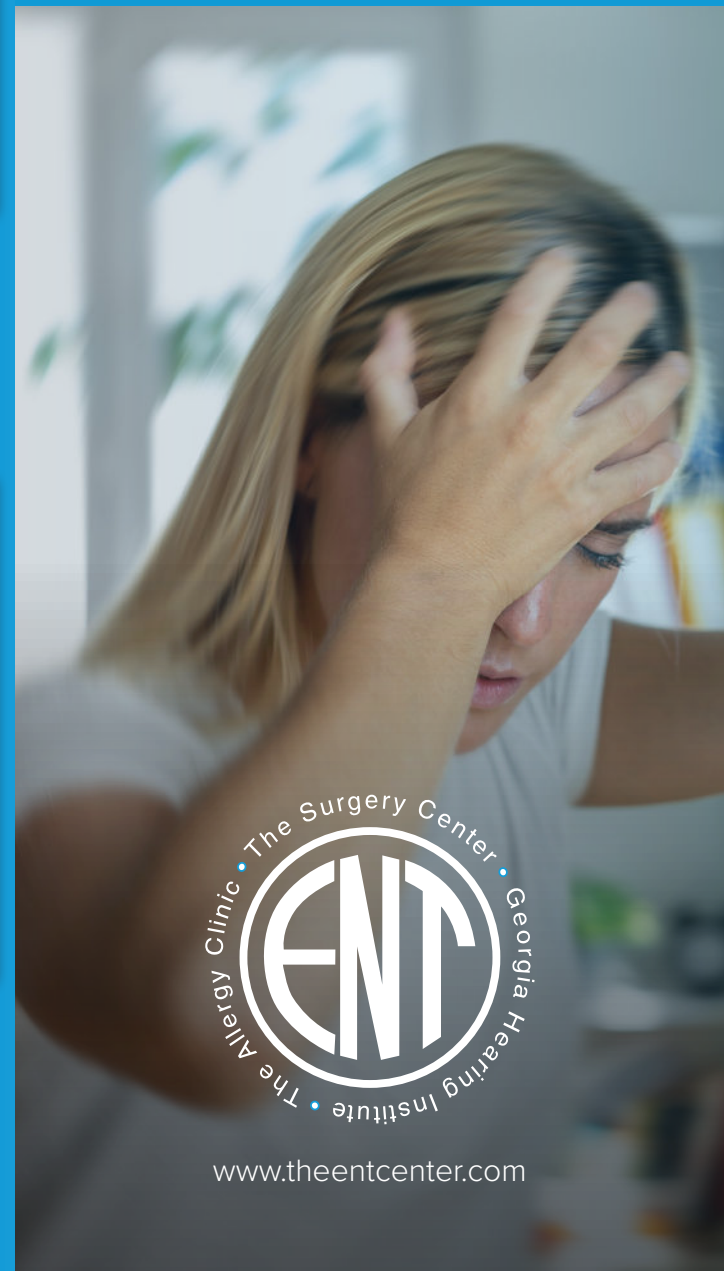
6084 Lakeview Road  
Warner Robins, GA 31088

Phone: (478) 333-2235

Fax: (478) 333-2238

# The ENT Center of Central Georgia

## Dizziness and Balance



[www.theentcenter.com](http://www.theentcenter.com)



Your brain maintains balance by using information from your eyes, the inner ear (vestibular system) and the sensory systems of the body (such as the skin, muscles and joints). Problems with any of these systems can result in vertigo, dizziness or unsteadiness.

## What are vertigo, dizziness and unsteadiness?

*Vertigo* is the feeling of self-motion or spinning when you are not moving. Vertigo is often considered a different symptom than dizziness.

*Dizziness* is nonspecific and can refer to numerous symptoms, such as lightheadedness or vertigo.

Both vertigo and dizziness can happen all of a sudden or be triggered by a position change, head movement and certain visual environments or sounds. In addition, both vertigo and dizziness can affect your ability to stay upright. In many cases, *unsteadiness*—the feeling of being unstable while seated, standing or walking—can occur and may increase your risk of falling.

Other symptoms that may be present with vertigo, dizziness and unsteadiness include nausea, vomiting, faintness, changes in hearing, pressure or fullness in the ear(s), increased tinnitus, fear and anxiety.

## What causes vertigo, dizziness or unsteadiness?

Some causes of vertigo, dizziness and unsteadiness include the following:

- Acoustic neuroma or vestibular schwannoma (tumors that affect the nerve leading to the ear)
- Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV). BPPV is caused by tiny crystals in the ear coming loose. Calcium crystals are found within the inner ear and help people sense gravity.
- Blood pressure changes
- Cardiovascular problems
- Fistula (hole) in the inner ear, such as superior canal dehiscence syndrome
- Head injury
- Infections, including ear infections
- Meniere's disease.
- Migraine
- Multiple medicines or drugs that can increase your risk of falling
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Ototoxic medications (medicines that are poisonous to the ear or balance system)
- Visual disorder

## When should I seek medical care?

Vertigo, dizziness and unsteadiness can occur with other serious illnesses. Therefore, if you have any of the following symptoms, be sure to seek emergency medical care:

- Chest pain
- Falling or problems walking
- High fever
- Head trauma or injury
- Sudden hearing loss
- Leg or arm weakness
- Numbness or tingling
- Severe neck stiffness
- Slurred speech
- Blurry vision



You should see your physician to determine why you have these symptoms.

Based on your symptoms, your physician may refer you for *balance testing* by an audiologist.

Balance testing evaluates your eyes, your inner ears and the sensory systems of your body to determine the cause of your symptoms. A hearing test is often included.

## Balance (or Vestibular) Rehabilitation

Your audiologic (hearing), balance and medical diagnostic tests help indicate whether vestibular (balance) rehabilitation could help you. *Vestibular rehabilitation* is an individualized balance-retraining exercise program. Its goal is to decrease dizziness, improve balance and improve functional activities and quality of life.

Many audiologists provide some vestibular rehabilitation. However, other clinicians, such as physical therapists, are trained to provide more extensive rehabilitation and fall-risk prevention.

## When should I see an audiologist?

*Audiologists* perform tests to gather information about your hearing and balance function and determine the possible cause(s) of your symptoms. These test results will provide diagnostic information on how to treat your vertigo, dizziness and unsteadiness. Audiologists can help you learn what is causing your symptoms, easing your uncertainty about your condition.

*Content contributed by ASHA member Kristen Janky, Au.D., Ph.D., CCC-A. Compliments of American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) 2200 Research Blvd., Rockville, MD 20850 / 800-638-8255*