

PERILYMPH FISTULA

When the ear suffers concussive damage, the entrances to the inner ear may be disrupted by the event. Generally a severe episode such as a blast exposure (explosives, heavy gunfire etc.) is responsible, but otherwise severe pressure effects or concussive blows, especially if water is forced into the ear by a blow.

The trauma may produce two patterns ([Trauma](#)): compression or dislocation of the stapes (the third hearing bone) at the upper entrance to the middle ear (the oval window), or rupture of the lower entrance (the round window). Rending either results in leakage of inner ear contents (perilymph) into the middle ear.

The problem may also occur after stapedectomy surgery, especially if large sections of the stapes footplate are removed at surgery.



Perilymph Fistula: Commonly after blast exposure.

Characteristics

This loss of the fluid contents may cause fluctuating, perhaps progressive loss of hearing, with associated severe unsteadiness and tinnitus. The hearing loss is frequently permanent in all or part, but it maybe difficult to discern the effects of the original trauma from the effects of the leakage.

In the past this condition has probably been over-diagnosed, a considerable number of dizziness examples being attributed to this origin, but without clear confirmation, as surgical exploration may not reveal concrete evidence of leakage. Overt problems tend to be evident in the more severely injured cases.

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Other Locations

Beenleigh

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Treatment

In many cases, confinement to bed with the head elevated leads to a cessation of symptoms. But more severe cases may prompt surgical intervention.

Surgery aims to seal the leakage in an attempt to salvage hearing as best as possible, by approaching the site via the external canal and applying a soft tissue seal to the site of damage. However, the prognosis for hearing remains guarded.

Perilymph fistulae are discerned from other dizziness by the history of trauma and immediately subsequent fluctuating (often low frequency) nerve deafness (although the latter is similar to early Meniere's disease, that may be the origin of some "fistulae" of uncertain cause).

More information

- [Perilymph Fistula](#)

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