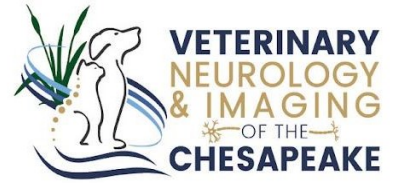


NEUROLOGY

Idiopathic Vestibular Disease (Cats)

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Idiopathic vestibular disease in cats is a syndrome seen in cats of all ages in which they suddenly become very dizzy. Signs of dizziness include falling, rolling, trouble walking, developing a head tilt and abnormal eye movements (nystagmus). The dizziness can be so severe that the cat will vomit or stop eating.

The cause is unknown although a change in the vestibular apparatus—which in each ear includes the utricle, saccule, and three semicircular canals—is suspected. Other causes for vestibular disease should be ruled out such as inner/middle ear infections, polyps in the middle ear, encephalitis-meningitis and tumors. Some drugs can cause these signs, as well. These conditions are often evaluated and eliminated as a cause following a brain MRI and a spinal fluid evaluation.

Treatment is supportive and may include fluid support, food support, anti-nausea medications and protecting the cat from falling from heights. Some cats will need assistance getting into and out of the litter box. Most cats will improve within 10 to 14 days, but some cats persist with a head tilt for longer.