

The Vestibular System

What is the Vestibular System, and how does it contribute to your child's balance?

The vestibular system is made up of fluid filled organs that are located in the inner ear and provides us information about our body's movement. It responds to gravitational pull in order to send signals to our brain about the direction and speed at which we are moving.

The vestibular system is one of our key components of balance and helps individuals of all ages maintain visual stability. It is also responsible for allowing us to stabilize our eyes during movement and helps to maintain our head in an upright position.

Ways to Activate the Vestibular System

Swinging, spinning, running, and monkey bars are all examples of activities that stimulate the vestibular system. Really, any activity that involves active movement of the body!

Signs that Indicate Vestibular Dysfunction

- Complaints of dizziness
- Vertigo, or reports of the room spinning
- Reading difficulties, this can indicate gaze stability deficits. This is sometimes reported as headaches during or after reading
- Imbalance or frequent loss of balance, this is sometimes attributed to clumsiness

In addition to these signs, vestibular dysfunction is also often associated with recent concussions or history of multiple concussions. This system can also be impacted in children who have had multiple ear infections within the past year or have had ear tubes placed.

Children may experience deficits with their vestibular system for many reasons, and these deficits can impact their ability to actively participate in age appropriate activities and recreation.

Starfish therapies offers vestibular screens for children of all ages as well as concurrent vestibular therapy should the need be indicated. The vestibular system is just like any other part of our body: with the right exercises and treatments significant improvements can be made!