



M I D W E S T

Ear Institute

(317) 842-4901 or toll free (800) 818-3277

Labyrinthitis

Labyrinthitis is an infection or inflammation of the inner ear. The majority of cases are caused by a virus, although occasionally it may be bacterial in origin. Infections that are caused by a virus are due to the common cold or flu and infrequently cause hearing loss. Infections that are caused by bacteria affect both the hearing and balance with possibly irreversible severe consequences.

The symptoms of labyrinthitis are that of a sudden onset of severe incapacitating vertigo with nausea and vomiting lasting 24-48 hours followed by seven to ten days of disequilibrium and motion-induced vertigo. Gradual improvement occurs but may take from six weeks to six months.

Aggressive early treatment with appropriate medications can lessen the severity and duration of these dizzy symptoms and reduce the undesirable consequences. The drugs of choice for viral infections are steroids and anti-viral medications. For bacterial infections, antibiotics are used.