

Q. Why aren't the “dizzy pills” my doctor gave me helping?

A. In most cases, pills are not a permanent solution for dizziness symptoms. Dizziness is not a disease or diagnosis, but a group of symptoms. These include spinning vertigo, nausea, lightheadedness and/or unsteadiness. Many different disorders can produce these symptoms. A precise diagnosis is required in order to provide effective treatment.

The most commonly prescribed drug for dizziness is Antivert (meclizine HCL). The primary effect of Antivert is drowsiness. This effect partially masks the symptoms. It has no curative or preventative effects. Several studies have shown that long-term use of these medications can slow or stop the natural process of recovery from dizziness problems.

You can do something about it. The National Institutes of Health reports that 85% of dizziness is due to otologic (inner ear) disorders. If your family doctor has been unable to give you relief, consider consulting with an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) physician. Some ENT doctors have undertaken additional fellowship training and sub-specialize in treating hearing and balance disorders.