Causes and Prevention
Some balance disorders are caused by problems in the inner ear. The part of the inner ear that is responsible for balance is the vestibular system, also known as the labyrinth. When the labyrinth becomes infected or swollen, this condition is called labyrinthitis. It is typically accompanied by vertigo and imbalance. Upper respiratory infections and other viral infections, and, less commonly, bacterial infections, can lead to labyrinthitis. Other balance disorders may involve another part of the body, such as the brain or the heart. For example, diseases of the circulatory system, such as stroke, can cause dizziness and other balance problems. Smoking and diabetes can increase the risk of stroke. Low blood pressure can also cause dizziness. Aging, infections, head injury and many medicines may also result in a balance problem.

Problems Caused by Medications
Balance problems can also result from taking many medications. For example, some medicines, such as those that help lower blood pressure, can make a person feel dizzy. Ototoxic drugs are medicines that damage the inner ear. If your medicine is ototoxic, you may feel off balance. Sometimes the damage lasts only as long as you take the drug; many times it is permanent.

Groups of drugs that are more likely to be ototoxic include:
- antidepressants
- anti-seizure drugs (anticonvulsants)
- hypertensive (high blood pressure) drugs
- sedatives
- tranquilizers
- anxiolytics (anti-anxiety drugs)
- aminoglycosides (a type of antibiotic)
- diuretics
- vasodilators
- certain analgesics (painkillers)
- certain chemotherapeutics (anti-cancer drugs).

Check with your doctor if you notice a problem while taking a medication. Ask if other medications can be used instead. If not, ask if the dosage can be safely reduced. Sometimes it cannot. However, your doctor will help you get the medication you need while trying to reduce unwanted side effects.

Balance problems due to high blood pressure can be managed by eating less salt (less sodium), maintaining a healthy weight, and exercising. Balance problems due to low blood pressure may be managed by drinking plenty of fluids, such as water, avoiding alcohol, and being cautious regarding your body’s posture and movement, such as standing up slowly and avoiding crossing your legs when you’re seated.

Source: National Institutes of Health