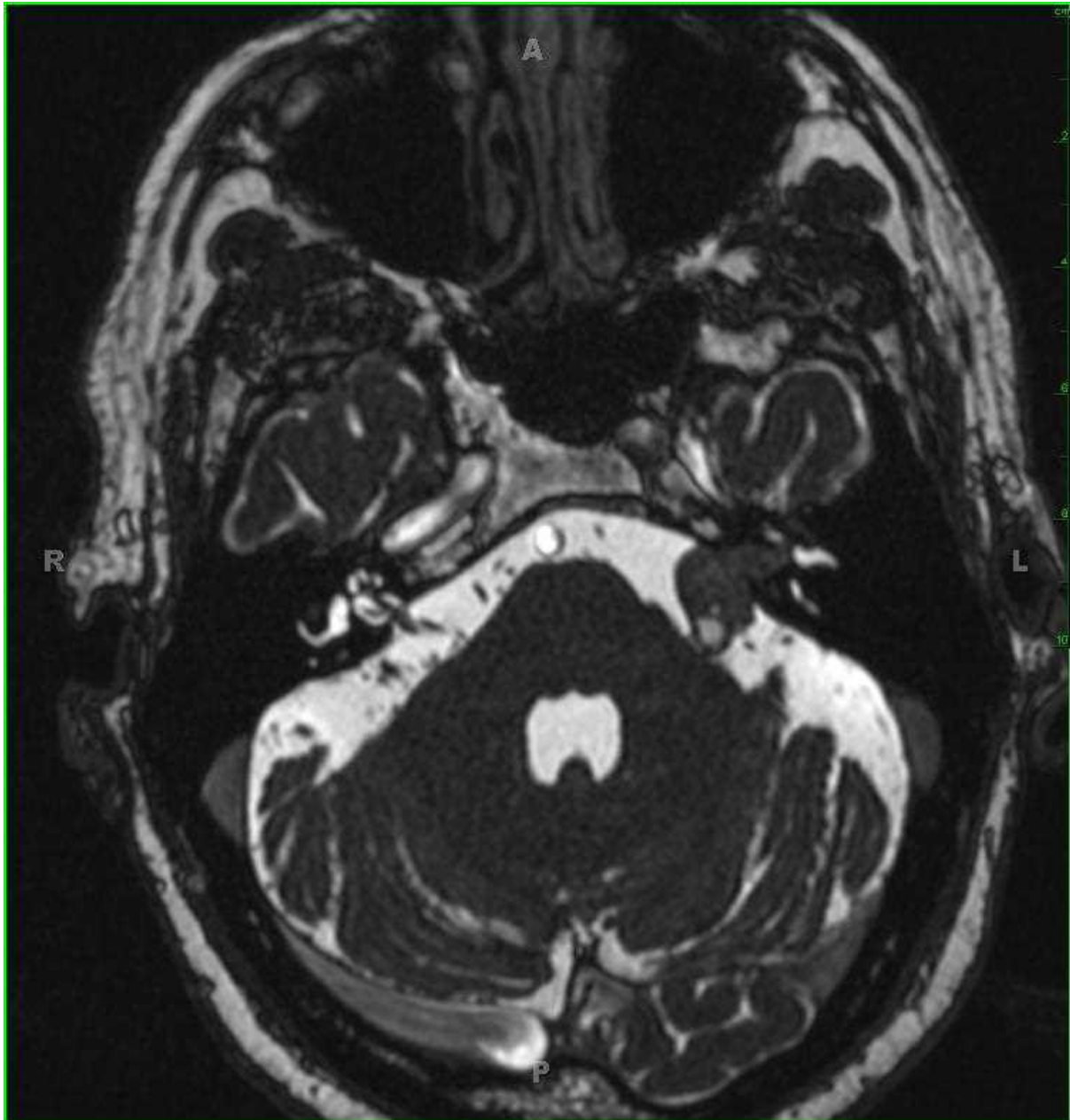


# Acoustic Neuroma (Vestibular Schwannoma)

*A clear, reassuring guide for patients*

## What is an Acoustic Neuroma?



I'm Dr. Ravindran Karuppiah, a Consultant Neurosurgeon practicing in Malaysia, and I often meet patients who feel anxious after hearing the term *acoustic neuroma*. Let me explain it in a simple and reassuring way.

An **acoustic neuroma** is a **non-cancerous (benign) growth** that develops on the nerve responsible for hearing and balance. This nerve runs from your inner ear to your brain.

Because it grows slowly, many people may not notice symptoms early. Over time, as the tumour becomes larger, it can press on nearby nerves and structures, which leads to the symptoms people start to feel.

The key thing I want you to understand is this:

- 👉 **This is not a cancer. It does not spread to other parts of the body.**
- 👉 **It is treatable, especially when detected early.**

Many patients feel overwhelmed when they first hear this diagnosis—but with proper evaluation and the right treatment plan, outcomes are often very good.

## **Symptoms to Watch For**





Acoustic neuromas usually affect **one side**, so symptoms often start subtly and progress gradually.

Here are the most common signs to look out for:

### 1. Hearing Loss (Most Common)

- Gradual loss of hearing in one ear
- Difficulty understanding speech, especially in noisy environments
- Needing to increase volume on one side

Many patients initially think this is just “age-related hearing loss” or ear blockage—but **one-sided hearing loss should always be checked**.

### 2. Ringing in the Ear (Tinnitus)

- A constant or intermittent ringing, buzzing, or humming sound
- Usually affects one ear

This can be mild at first but may become more noticeable over time.

### 3. Balance Problems or Dizziness

- Feeling unsteady when walking
- Occasional spinning sensation
- Loss of coordination

Because the tumour affects the balance nerve, patients may feel “off balance” rather than truly dizzy.

### 4. Fullness or Pressure in the Ear

- A blocked or heavy sensation
- Often mistaken for ear infection or sinus issues

### 5. Facial Symptoms (Less Common, Usually Later)

- Numbness or tingling on one side of the face
- Weakness of facial muscles

This happens when the tumour presses on nearby facial nerves.

#### **Important point:**

These symptoms are not always caused by a tumour—but if they are **persistent or worsening**, they should not be ignored.

## When Should You See a Neurosurgeon?



Many patients ask me:  
*"When should I worry?"*

Here's a simple guide.

**You should seek medical evaluation if you notice:**

- Hearing loss in **one ear**
- Persistent ringing in one ear
- Ongoing balance issues
- Symptoms that are gradually worsening

**You should seek urgent attention if:**

- Your balance is significantly affected
- You experience facial numbness or weakness
- Your hearing drops suddenly

The first step is usually a hearing test and imaging (such as an MRI scan). These help us confirm whether a tumour is present and understand its size and position.

**👉 Early diagnosis gives you more treatment options and better outcomes.**

## How is Acoustic Neuroma Treated?



Treatment is **not one-size-fits-all**. The right approach depends on:

- Size of the tumour
- Symptoms
- Patient's age and general health
- Rate of growth

I always tailor the treatment plan to the individual patient.

### 1. Observation (Watchful Monitoring)

For small tumours with minimal symptoms:

- Regular MRI scans to monitor growth
- Hearing tests over time

👉 Many acoustic neuromas grow very slowly—or sometimes not at all.

This approach avoids unnecessary treatment while keeping things under close observation.

### 2. Radiosurgery (Targeted Radiation)

This is a non-invasive treatment:

- No open surgery
- Focused radiation to stop tumour growth
- Usually done in a single session

👉 The goal is to **control the tumour**, not remove it.

This option is suitable for:

- Small to medium tumours
- Patients who prefer to avoid surgery
- Patients not fit for major surgery

### 3. Microsurgical Removal

Surgery may be recommended when:

- The tumour is large
- Symptoms are worsening
- There is pressure on surrounding brain structures

This involves:

- Removing the tumour through a precise surgical approach
- Protecting important nerves (hearing and facial nerve)
- Careful planning to achieve the safest outcome

I want to be very clear about something:

- 👉 **Modern neurosurgery is highly advanced and precise.**
- 👉 **The goal is not just removal—but preserving function and quality of life.**

Every case is carefully evaluated to balance risks and benefits.

### **Why Choose a Specialist?**







Acoustic neuroma is a **highly specialised condition** that sits in a delicate area near critical nerves.

Choosing the right specialist makes a significant difference.

### **1. Experience in Skull Base Surgery**

This tumour lies deep within the skull, close to nerves controlling:

- Hearing
- Facial movement
- Balance

A surgeon experienced in **skull base and nerve-preserving techniques** is essential.

### **2. Personalised Treatment Planning**

Not every tumour needs surgery.

A specialist will:

- Assess your condition thoroughly
- Recommend the most appropriate option
- Avoid unnecessary intervention

### **3. Focus on Function, Not Just Removal**

The goal is not just to treat the tumour—but to:

- Preserve facial movement
- Protect hearing where possible
- Maintain your quality of life

### **4. Clear Communication and Reassurance**

Patients often come in worried—and understandably so.

My approach is always:

- To explain clearly
- To guide you step by step
- To ensure you feel confident in your decision

## **A Final Word to You**

If you've been searching for answers, it likely means something doesn't feel right—and that's important.

Most symptoms related to acoustic neuroma develop slowly, and many patients delay evaluation because they hope it will go away.

👉 **Trust your instincts.**

👉 **Early assessment brings clarity and peace of mind.**

## **Book a Consultation**

If you are experiencing symptoms like one-sided hearing loss, ringing in the ear, or balance problems, I would encourage you to get it checked.

I see patients at:

- Subang Jaya Medical Centre
- ParkCity Medical Centre
- Columbia Asia Hospital Setapak

📞 **WhatsApp:** +6017 504 4389

👉 A simple consultation can help you understand what's happening—and what your next step should be.

You don't have to figure this out alone. I'm here to guide you.