

Parkinson's Disease Information for Patients

<http://www.neurologychannel.com/patient-information-parkinsons-disease/index.shtml>

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a progressive neurological disorder that affects more than 1 million people in the United States and 4 million people worldwide. There is no cure for Parkinson's and the goal of treatment is to control symptoms.

Symptoms of Parkinson's usually begin on one side of the body and often worsen over time. Primary symptoms include involuntary shaking (tremors), stiffness (rigidity), slow movement (bradykinesia), difficulty walking, and poor balance. Parkinson's also can cause secondary symptoms, such as difficulty swallowing, voice changes, digestive disorders, and depression. In some cases, Parkinson's disease causes severe disability and presents several challenges for doctors, patients, and caregivers.

Here are some questions for patients and their caregivers to ask about Parkinson's disease. **Print this page**, check off the questions you would like answered, and take it with you to your doctor appointment. Knowledge about Parkinson's disease can make it easier to make important decisions about treatment and patient care.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Parkinson's Disease

- Why do you suspect that I have Parkinson's disease?
- Might my Parkinson's symptoms be related to another disorder? If so, will symptoms resolve once this condition is successfully treated?
- How will you determine if I do have Parkinson's disease? What kinds of diagnostic tests will be performed?
- How should I prepare for these tests?
- When will the results of my tests be available? Will someone call me to follow up or should I call for the test results?
Date: _____ **Telephone number to call:** _____
- Are others in my family at increased risk for developing Parkinson's disease?
- Do you recommend that I be seen by a neurologist who specializes in Parkinson's disease? Why or why not?
- How do you expect my Parkinson's to progress? What factors affect disease progression?
- What additional symptoms or complications might I experience?

- If secondary symptoms of Parkinson's develop, how will these symptoms be managed?
- How can I help slow the progression of my Parkinson's?
- What type of treatment do you recommend? Why do you recommend this treatment?
- What are the possible risks, benefits, and long-term effects associated with this treatment?
- Will the cost of my treatment be covered by insurance?
- Do you recommend lifestyle modifications, such as changes in diet or relaxation techniques? Why or why not?
- Might physical therapy, occupational therapy, and/or speech therapy be helpful? Why or why not?
- Are there any activities, over-the-counter drugs, dietary supplements, or certain foods that I should avoid?
- Will medications be used to treat my Parkinson's disease? If so, which medications?
- How should I take my Parkinson's medications?
- What are the possible side effects of these drugs? How can I help reduce these adverse effects?
- What should I do if I develop severe Parkinson's symptoms or medication side effects?
Telephone number to call:
- How will my condition be monitored during treatment?
- How often will I have follow-up appointments?
Next appointment: Doctor: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____
- What should I do if my condition begins to interfere with daily activities (e.g., my ability to work, drive, prepare meals, etc.), if I or my caregivers have questions between my appointments, or if Parkinson's symptoms return during treatment?
Telephone number to call:

- If my condition worsens in spite of treatment, what other treatments are available?
- What are the possible benefits, risks, complications, and long-term effects associated with these treatments for Parkinson's disease?
- What is deep brain stimulation (DBS)? Might this treatment be used to reduce my Parkinson's symptoms? Why or why not?
- Might I require surgery to treat my Parkinson's disease? Why or why not?
- What does surgery to treat Parkinson's involve?
- How long will I be in the hospital? What kind of care will I need after surgery?
- How should I expect to feel after surgery?
- What are the possible complications of this procedure? What should I do if I experience any of these complications?
Telephone number to call:
- Are there any promising new treatments available for Parkinson's disease?
- Do you recommend that I participate in a clinical trial for patients who have Parkinson's? Why or why not?
- Can you recommend a local or online support group for me and for my caregivers?
- What additional sources for information about Parkinson's disease are available?

Notes/Additional Information