



Parkinson's Disease from <https://parkinson.org/>

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a neurodegenerative disorder. Symptoms develop slowly over years, and vary from person to person. Common symptoms include:

- Tremor- involuntary shaking of the hand, arms, legs, jaw, or tongue.
- Bradykinesia- slowness of movement
- Rigidity- stiffness of arms or legs
- Gait and balance problems

Other symptoms can include slow thought process, forgetfulness, confusion, lack of judgment, compulsive behaviors, paranoia, anxiety, and personality changes.

The cause of PD is unknown and there is no cure. Treatments include medications and surgery. The disease itself is not fatal, but complications from the disease can be.

10 early signs:

- 1- Tremor in finger, thumb, hand, or chin
- 2- Small handwriting (smaller than in your past)
- 3- Loss of smell
- 4- Trouble sleeping because of thrashing in bed or acting out dreams
- 5- Trouble moving or walking like stiffness or not swinging arms when walking or feeling "stuck"
- 6- Constipation or straining to move your bowels
- 7- A soft or low voice or changes like sounding hoarse
- 8- Masked face or looking serious, depressed, or mad even when not in a bad mood
- 9- Dizziness or fainting related to low blood pressure linked to PD
- 10- Stooping or hunching over when you stand

Stages:

- 1- Mild symptoms that don't interfere with daily activities. May experience tremors on one side of the body, changes in posture, walking, and facial expression
- 2- Symptoms getting worse. Tremor, rigidity and other movement symptoms on both sides of the body. Problems walking and with posture. Daily tasks may take longer and be more difficult.
- 3- Loss of balance and slow movements. Falls are common, still independent but significant impairment in ADLs
- 4- Symptoms limit mobility and ADLs, requiring assistance.
- 5- Debilitating, requiring 24-hour care. May experience hallucinations or delusions as well.

How you can help as a caregiver

- Focus on good communication skills. Slow down, ask one question at a time, avoid confrontation, don't take conflict personally but strive to resolve it quickly for the client.



- PD medications must be taken at the time prescribed, there is not the window around the time that other diagnosis offer. Remind the client of medications a few minutes early so they are taken on time every time.
- Diet- There is no specific diet for PD, however overall good health impacts PD symptoms. People should eat a variety of whole grains, vegetables, fruits, milk and dairy products, and protein-rich meats and beans. Nuts, olive oil, fish, and eggs should be included for their beneficial fats.
- Maintaining emotional health impacts physical health. Focus on a person's strengths, nurturing relationships, and helping a person stay connected to resources that help them cope.
- If a person is struggling with ADLs, talk with the office about getting an Occupational Therapy evaluation who can recommend adaptations and home modifications to enable a person to remain independent.
- Help maintain dental health to limit additional complications in speech and chewing. Watch for swallowing concerns and report them to the office if you notice choking or aspiration.

If you have questions about Parkinson's Disease or how to care for a client with PD, please contact the office.

To complete this CEU, please watch the following video:

Early Parkinson's Disease (5:47)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNzlaABFAMc>

(total time 30 minutes)