

Parkinson's Disease Awareness

Factsheet



Definition

Parkinson's is a progressive neurological condition. This means it is a problem in the brain and gets worse over time.

In numbers

- 1 in 500 people have Parkinson's, that's about 127,000 in the UK
- Most people who develop Parkinson's are aged 50 or over but 1 in 20 is under the age of 40

An umbrella term

Parkinson's disease is an umbrella term for an number of diseases effecting the brain.

Idiopathic	Vascular
Drug-induced	Lewy Bodies
Inherited	Juvenile

Causes

People with Parkinson's lack dopamine because some of the nerve cells that produce it have died.

It's unknown why people get Parkinson's, but it is believed that it's a combination of genetic and environmental factors that cause the dopamine producing nerve cells to die.

Progression

- The loss of nerve cells in the brain causes the symptoms of Parkinson's to appear
- There's currently no cure for Parkinson's and we don't yet know why people develop the condition
- Parkinson's may not be the direct cause of death, but symptoms do worsen over time

Signs & symptoms

Tremors

Tremors (shaking) is a rhythmical movement that can't be controlled, often starting in one hand.

Slow

People with Parkinson's may find that starting movement and performing everyday tasks to be difficult.

Ridgid

Stiffness or inflexibility of the muscles and can cause pain and cramping.

Swallowing

Parkinson's affects the natural tendency to swallow, even when not eating.

Freezes

People with Parkinson's may experience freezing at some point. They may stop suddenly while walking and feel like their feet are 'glued' to the ground. They may then be unable to move forward again for several seconds or minutes.

Communication

About 50% of people with Parkinson's develop problems with their speech and communication.

Eyes

The most common eye problems people with Parkinson's can experience are blurred vision, double vision, excessive watering of the eyes and dry eyes.

Pain

There are many different types of pain in Parkinson's. These range from headaches to muscular and joint pain.

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5 Stages of Parkinson's Disease

Stage 1 – Early PD

Severity - MILD Symptoms of PD are mild and only seen on one side of the body (unilateral involvement).	Symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tremor of one hand• Rigidity• Clumsy leg• One side of the face may be affected, impacting the expression
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Stage 2 – Early PD

Severity - MILD Symptoms of PD on both sides of the body (bilateral involvement) or at the midline.	Symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of facial expression on both sides• Decreased blinking• Speech abnormalities• Rigidity of the muscles in the trunk
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Stage 3 – Mid stage PD

Severity - MODERATE Symptoms of PD are characterised by loss of balance and slowness of movement.	Symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balance is compromised• Inability to make rapid, automatic and involuntary adjustments• All other PD symptoms present
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Stage 4 – Advanced PD

Severity - SEVERE Symptoms of PD are severely disabling.	Symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Could be able to stand and walk unassisted but noticeably incapacitated• Unable to live an independent life and needs assistance
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Stage 5 – Advanced PD

Severity - SEVERE Symptoms of PD are severe and are characterised by an inability to rise.	Symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patients fall when standing or turning• May freeze or stumble when walking• Hallucinations or delusions
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Treatments for Parkinson's

Medication

Drugs are the predominant means of controlling the symptoms of Parkinson's while research into finding a cure continues.

Surgery

Surgery is generally only used to treat people who have had Parkinson's for some time and whose symptoms are not controlled effectively by medication.

Occupational therapy

These are health professionals who help people with mobility problems to achieve maximum function and independence.

Speech & language therapy

These are health professionals who specialise in all aspects of communication, from facial expression and body language to speech and specialised communication aids.



Physiotherapy

Physiotherapists use physical treatments, including exercise, to help manage any stiffness in joints and to restore muscle strength and mobility.

Exercise

A regular exercise regime can help in maintaining your abilities, strengthening your muscles, increasing mobility in your joints and building up your general fitness and health.