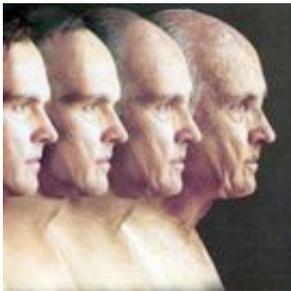


# Parkinson's Disease



Parkinson's Disease is an illness affecting the brain.

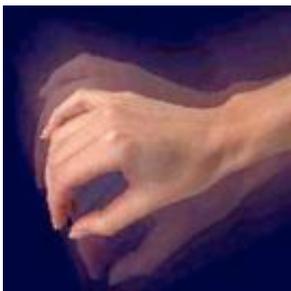


It gets worse as people who have it get older.



Parkinson's Disease happens when certain nerve cells in the brain do not work properly.

These nerves help to control your movement.



If these nerves don't work properly, your body isn't able to control its movement normally.



When a lot of these nerves don't work properly, the symptoms of Parkinson's Disease start to show.



## What Causes Parkinson's Disease?



Doctors do not know why Parkinson's Disease happens.



**Scientists are working hard to find out why it happens.**



We make every effort to make sure the information is correct (right).

However, we cannot be responsible for any actions as a result of using this information.

# Signs and Symptoms



1. **Tremor (shaking)** - this usually begins in one hand.

This is the first symptom for most people with Parkinson's Disease



2. **Slowness of movement** - people with Parkinson's Disease may have difficulty moving.



3. **Stiffness (rigidity) of muscles** - problems with standing up from a chair or rolling over in bed.



Other symptoms you may have are:



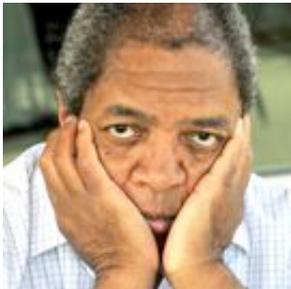
- Sleep disturbances (waking up a lot at night)



- Constipation (finding it hard to poo)



- Urine problems (needing to wee suddenly)



- Depression and finding it hard to remember things



Each person who has Parkinson's Disease may have very different symptoms.



We make every effort to make sure the information is correct (right).

However, we cannot be responsible for any actions as a result of using this information.

# How Many People Have Parkinson's Disease?



In the UK:



- 1 in 500 people have Parkinson's Disease.



- Men are more likely to get Parkinson's Disease than women.



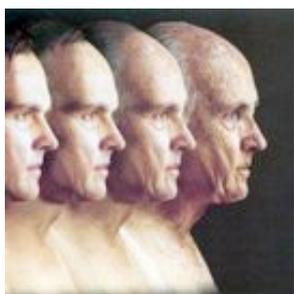
**At what age do people get Parkinson's Disease?**



Symptoms tend to first appear when a person is older than 50 years of age, but some people can get it when they are younger.



## How to find out if you have Parkinson's Disease:



Parkinson's Disease usually happens slowly.

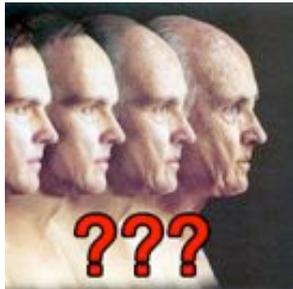
It can be a long time before the symptoms get worse.



It may not be easy to diagnose (work out if you have) Parkinson's Disease.



## How Parkinson's Disease Progresses



The symptoms of Parkinson's Disease usually begin slowly.

Everyone is different and will get different symptoms.



**Is there a cure for Parkinson's Disease?**



There is no cure for Parkinson's Disease at the moment, but there are different medicines that you may be given to help your symptoms.



Scientists are learning more about the illness all the time.



## Will I die from Parkinson's Disease?



Parkinson's Disease itself does not directly kill people.



New treatments help people live long lives.



If someone is more elderly and weak and they also have Parkinson's Disease, they may develop other illnesses.

It is these other illnesses like pneumonia that could lead to their death.



**Is Parkinson's Disease inherited (passed on through your family)?**

It is very rare for people to pass on Parkinson's Disease to their children.



We make every effort to make sure the information is correct (right).

However, we cannot be responsible for any actions as a result of using this information.

# Living With Parkinson's Disease



There is a lot of equipment to help you carry on with your daily life, such as:



- Smaller pieces of equipment to help with washing, bathing, reaching, eating and drinking.



- These can also be larger pieces of equipment such as stair lifts and wheelchairs.



- A therapist (a type of health professional) will talk to you about your needs and will give you suggestions to help.



He/she will be able to suggest what sort of equipment will help you.

They may suggest you do certain exercises as well to help you move more easily.



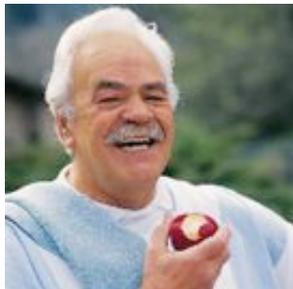
You may get some money from benefits to help you buy some equipment.



## Diet



You should eat 3 healthy meals a day.



You should eat a mixture of:



- Starchy foods - for example bread, rice or potatoes



- Fresh fruit and vegetables



- Dairy products



- Foods containing protein - for example meat, fish or beans



## **Exercise**



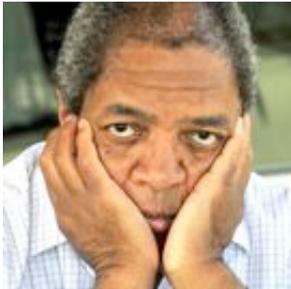
Exercise is important for people with Parkinson's Disease as their muscles and joints get stiff.



Joining an exercise group or sporting activity can be a great way to make friends as well.



Exercise can also help you fight depression, which some people might have together with Parkinson's Disease.

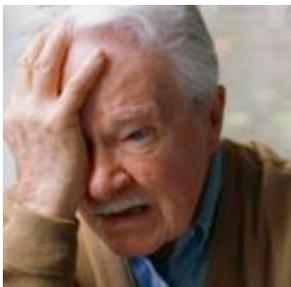


## **Depression and Anxiety**



Some people with Parkinson's Disease may also have depression.

Symptoms of depression are:



- Not feeling good about yourself



- Not being interested in your usual activities



- Feeling tired and finding it hard to sleep



Doctors think that this happens because of chemical changes in your brain.

It can also happen because of how Parkinson's Disease changes your life.



It may be helpful for you to speak to your doctor about how you feel.



## Living Alone



Many people with Parkinson's Disease live alone and manage very well.

A lot can be done to make your home safe and easier to live in.



People with Parkinson's Disease often worry about falling (as their movement becomes difficult).



A lot can be done to make falling less likely.

For example, brighter lighting can help.

Simply moving your furniture or rugs into different positions can help.



Social Services may be able to help you with 'Meals on Wheels' and home care.



If it is becoming hard to cope at home, Social Services can come to see you at home.

They can look at what you need.



## Relationships



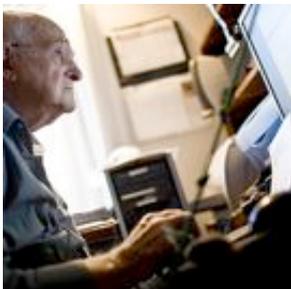
Being ill can be very hard for you and the people around you.

It can affect your friendships and your sexual relationship with your partner.



Some people are frightened that they will become disabled very quickly.

Other people think they will only become a little disabled.



It is important to learn about Parkinson's Disease so you know the facts and possibilities.



Try to talk to your friends and partner about your thoughts and feelings.



**Things change within your relationship**



This can bring a lot of stress.

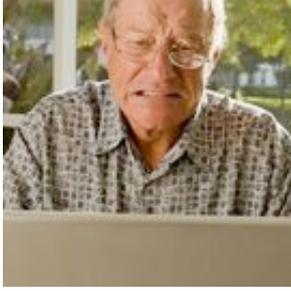


Your partner or family may need to take on cooking and cleaning more.

They may need to help you a lot.



Partners and family can often feel stressed by the extra things they have to do.



You may feel cross that you can't do so much and that you have to rely on others.

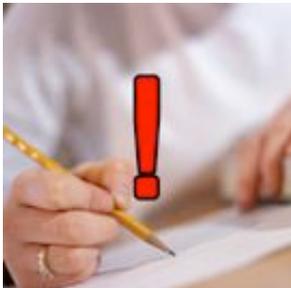


You may feel cross with each other when you don't want to feel like that.

These changes can be hard to get used to and understand.

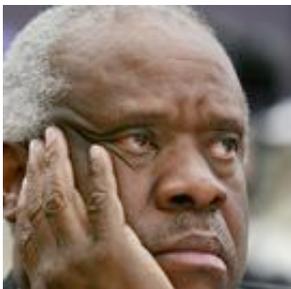


## **Problems With Communication**



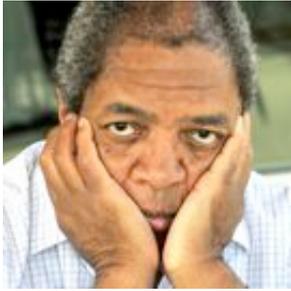
Parkinson's can make it hard for you to write and speak.

It can be hard to control how you communicate – and can affect how your face looks.



People around you may think you are not interested or are cross.

This is because your facial expressions are not working as they would normally.



## **Depression**



You may feel you want to hide away from others. This may make you feel a bit 'cut off' and separate.



## **Feeling 'Cut Off' From People**



You may feel embarrassed about your symptoms.

You may not feel so confident.

Sometimes other people may feel uncomfortable around your shaking.



## **Tiredness**



Parkinson's Disease can be very tiring.



If a partner or family member also has to take on a lot more to help you, they can also feel tired.



People may become more cross when they are tired which can be hard in relationships.



We make every effort to make sure the information is correct (right).

However, we cannot be responsible for any actions as a result of using this information.

# Treatment



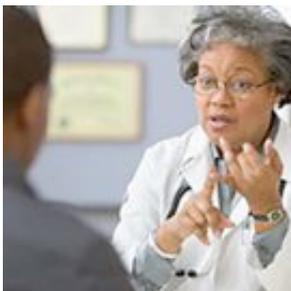
## Medicine



There are no medicines that can cure Parkinson's Disease completely (make it go away forever).



But, medicines are used to control the symptoms of Parkinson's Disease (how it affects you).



You and your doctor will need to talk about when to start taking medicines.



People react to the medicines in different ways.

What works for one person, may not work for another.



**Types of health care professional you might meet:**

**Therapists**



**Dietician**



A Dietician can help with:



- Keeping a good weight



- Constipation (if you find it hard to poo)



- Making sure the medicine works well



- Advice on buying and making food



- Eating healthy meals



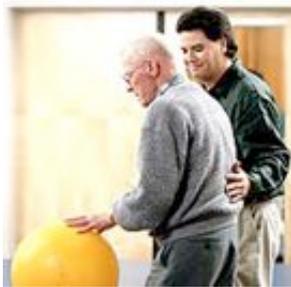
Your doctor can put you in touch with a Dietician.



## Physiotherapist



Physiotherapists use physical treatments to help people. They use:



- Exercise



- Manipulation (using hands to move the body)



- Heat



- Hydrotherapy (being in warm water)



Physiotherapists will help you move around.

For example, help your balance, using your hands, and getting in and out of bed.



They may also be able to help with any sleep problems or pain.



Your doctor or hospital will usually put you in touch with a Physiotherapist.



## Occupational Therapist



Occupational Therapists can help you carry on with the activities that are important to you:



- **Personal Care** - getting dressed, cleaning teeth, shopping, washing bathing and going to the toilet



- **Work** - job or housework



- **Leisure** - sports, hobbies and social life.



## **Speech and Language Therapist**



About half of people with Parkinson's Disease develop problems with their speech and communication.



You may also find it hard to swallow.

A Speech and Language Therapist can help with this.



## **What Are The Problems You May Have?**



## **Voice and Speech**



- Soft voice or quiet voice



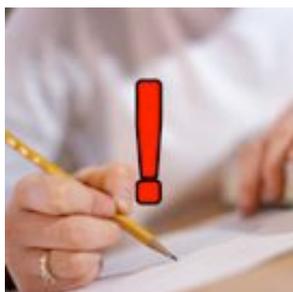
- Slurring, croaky or shaky voice



- Difficulty getting your voice started



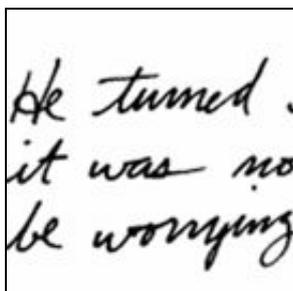
- Speaking too quickly



## Writing



It starts off normally but becomes smaller and smaller.



It is "spidery" and difficult to read.



Your hand shakes too much to write.



## Your Face



- You appear to have lost your frown or smile



- Your face does not show expression



- When you look in the mirror it does not look like you



- Your eyes seem lost in a gaze

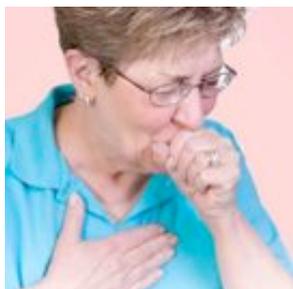


## **Posture (how you sit, stand, lie)**



Your posture may not be so good.

You may find it hard to keep your head up.



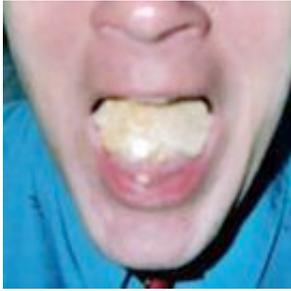
## **Swallowing**



- You find it hard to keep your head up and your lips closed - so saliva may collect in your mouth and you might dribble.



- Your teeth do not fit well



- Food is left in your mouth after you have finished a meal



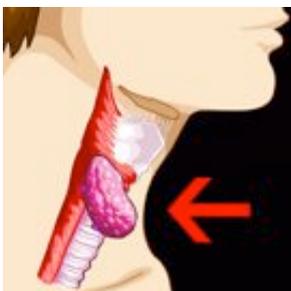
- You cough regularly when eating or drinking



- You choke on your food



- You take a long time to eat.



- Food feels as if it is sticking in your throat



## **Surgery As Treatment**

Surgery may not be the right treatment for everyone. Your hospital specialist will tell you if it may help you.

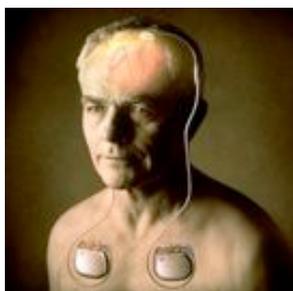
Different types of surgery are:



## **Deep Brain Stimulation**



This is when a wire is put into your brain.



The wire is connected to a piece of equipment that goes under your skin (often the chest).



The equipment sends a signal to the brain to help control the Parkinson's Disease symptoms.



## Lesioning



Lesioning is when a piece of equipment is put into the brain to carefully damage certain cells.

This is to stop Parkinson's symptoms.



It is not very common.



We make every effort to make sure the information is correct (right).

However, we cannot be responsible for any actions as a result of using this information.



## Complementary Therapies



There are many types of complementary therapies that may be considered.



They could be used alongside other medicines that your doctor gives you.

It is important to talk to your doctor if you wish to use them.



We make every effort to make sure the information is correct (right).

However, we cannot be responsible for any actions as a result of using this information.



The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities paid for this leaflet to be made.

**PRODIGY**

The medical information was provided by PRODIGY.

[www.prodigy.clarity.co.uk](http://www.prodigy.clarity.co.uk)

**easyhealth.org.uk**

Easy read translations were done by Easyhealth at Generate Opportunities Ltd.