





Parkinson's disease

A disorder of the central nervous system that affects movement, often including tremors.

Common

More than 200,000 US cases per year

-  Treatment can help, but this condition can't be cured
-  Requires a medical diagnosis
-  Lab tests or imaging often required
-  Chronic: can last for years or be lifelong

Nerve cell damage in the brain causes dopamine levels to drop, leading to the symptoms of Parkinson's.

Parkinson's often starts with a tremor in one hand. Other symptoms are slow movement, stiffness, and loss of balance.

Medications can help control the symptoms of Parkinson's.

Ages affected



Symptoms

Requires a medical diagnosis

Parkinson's often starts with a tremor in one hand. Other symptoms are slow movement, stiffness, and loss of balance.

People may experience:

Tremor: can occur at rest, in the hands, limbs, or can be postural

Muscular: stiff muscles, difficulty standing, difficulty with bodily movements, involuntary movements, muscle rigidity, problems with coordination, rhythmic muscle contractions, slow bodily movement, or slow shuffling gait

Sleep: early awakening, nightmares, restless sleep, or sleep disturbances

Whole body: fatigue, dizziness, poor balance, or restlessness

Cognitive: amnesia, confusion in the evening hours, dementia, or difficulty thinking and understanding

Speech: impaired voice, soft speech, or voice box spasms

Mood: anxiety or apathy

Nasal: distorted sense of smell or loss of smell

Urinary: dribbling of urine or leaking of urine

Facial: jaw stiffness or reduced facial expression

Also common: blank stare, constipation, daytime sleepiness, depression, difficulty swallowing, drooling, falling, fear of falling, limping, loss in contrast sensitivity, neck tightness, small handwriting, trembling, unintentional writhing, or weight loss

Treatments**Treatment consists of medications to increase dopamine**

Medications can help control the symptoms of Parkinson's.

Medications

Dopamine promoter: Stimulates dopamine receptors in the brain.

- Bromocriptine (Parlodel and Cycloset)
- Amantadine
- Cabergoline
- Carbidopa / Levodopa (Sinemet, Duopa, Sinemet CR, and Rytary)
- Ropinirole (Requip and Requip XL)
- Entacapone (Comtan)
- Tolcapone (Tasmar)
- Pramipexole (Mirapex and Mirapex ER)
- Rotigotine (Neupro)

Antidepressant: Prevents or relieves depression and elevates mood.

- Selegiline (Emsam, Zelapar, and Eldepryl)
- Rasagiline (Azilect)

Cognition-enhancing medication: Improves mental function, lowers blood pressure, and may balance mood.

- Rivastigmine

Anti-Tremor: Helps control tremor, shaking, and unsteadiness.

- Benztropine (Cogentin)

Self-care

Physical exercise: Aerobic activity for 20-30 minutes 5 days a week improves cardiovascular health. If injured, pursuing an activity that avoids the injured muscle

group or joint can help maintain physical function while recovering.

Specialists

Neurologist: Treats nervous system disorders.

Primary care provider (PCP): Prevents, diagnoses, and treats diseases.

Consult a doctor for medical advice

Note: The information you see describes what usually happens with a medical condition, but doesn't apply to everyone. This information isn't medical advice, so make sure to contact a healthcare provider if you have a medical problem. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or a emergency number immediately.

Sources: Mayo Clinic and others. [Learn more](#)