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Do You or a Loved One Have Parkinson's Disease?

Information and resources to help you live well
by Parkinson's Foundation (Paid Content)

PHOTO CREDIT: BETTY HANZIS

Nearly one million people in the U.S. are living with Parkinson's disease (PD). If you or a loved one are among the 60,000 Americans diagnosed with PD this year, it's important to recognize that you can still enjoy a good to great quality of life with the disease. The first step to living well with PD is understanding the disease and its progression.

Newly Diagnosed: Building a Better Life with PD

Receiving a PD diagnosis can be both a relief and overwhelming. For some, the diagnosis is a long-awaited explanation for previously unexplained symptoms. But the news can also leave people feeling stunned, unsure of what the future may look like and what next steps they should take. It's important to know that you're not alone and that the Parkinson's Foundation is here for you at every step of the journey to help you live well with PD. To learn about living well with PD, get a free Newly Diagnosed kit.

Managing PD Symptoms

PD is mistakenly thought of as a disease that only involves movement. However, in addition to motor symptoms such as tremor, stiffness and balance issues, most people develop non-motor symptoms as well. These can include anxiety, depression, sleep issues and more. There are many things you can do to live well with PD. The right medications and complementary therapies can help relieve some of your symptoms. Making smart choices in your daily life, from eating the right foods to building a network of support, will also play a big role in helping you live your best life. Exercising regularly, in particular, is an essential component of managing the symptoms of PD and will help you maintain balance, mobility and independence.

Treatment

If you can, seek out a movement disorder specialist, a neurologist who has completed extensive additional training in the neurology subspecialty of movement disorders. These specialists are most familiar with the full range of available PD medications, as well as any relevant clinical trials, and that can mean more successful treatment. There is no standard treatment for PD, so your treatment plan will be individualized to your specific symptoms.

For Care Partners

As a care partner, your responsibilities may include helping a loved one with daily activities, managing medications and making financial decisions. The care you provide may go beyond physical tasks to emotional and spiritual care as well. If you're a new care partner, it might be helpful to talk with an experienced caregiver or join PD Conversations, the online community of the Parkinson's Foundation. You'll also want to learn all you can about the disease early on so you can make informed decisions and provide the emotional and physical support that is needed now and in the future.

Genetics and PD

Scientists believe a combination of genetic and environmental factors are the cause of PD. Understanding the connection between PD and genetics can help us understand how the disease develops and ultimately how it can be treated or cured. This is why PD GENeration: Mapping the Future of Parkinson's Disease, a national initiative from the Parkinson's Foundation, is essential. PD GENeration offers genetic testing for clinically relevant PD-related genes and genetic counseling at no cost for people with PD.

You're Not Alone

If you are newly diagnosed or are a new care partner, consider making one of your first calls to the free Parkinson's Foundation Helpline at 1-800-4PD-INFO (473-4636). Staffed by nurses, social workers and health educators, the Helpline can provide up-to-date information in English and Spanish about PD, referrals to healthcare professionals, community resources and a wide variety of free publications.

While there is no cure for PD, there are many steps you can take to maintain and improve your quality of life and live well with the disease. The Parkinson's Foundation is your number one resource, whether you've been diagnosed with PD or you're a care partner to someone living with PD. Take the next step by visiting Parkinson.org.

Click here to get more information on PD GENeration and the latest PD research from the Parkinson's Foundation at Parkinson.org.

Questions? Call the Parkinson's Foundation Helpline at 1-800-4PD-INFO (473-4636)

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