

Natural Help 4...

Parkinson's Disease



What is Parkinson's Disease?

Parkinson's disease is a **degenerative disorder of the central nervous system**. It belongs to a scientific group of disorders referred to as movement disorders.

Parkinson's is associated with **tremors of the arms and legs, rigidity of the muscles, poor balance, slow movement (bradykinesia) and difficulty walking**, the most well known characteristic. It occurs as a result of the degeneration of nerve health in which nerve cells producing a chemical called dopamine in the substantia nigra and locus coeruleus areas of the brain.

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that stimulates motor neurons, (nerve cells which control the muscles) and strongly influences the thinking areas of the brain. When dopamine production decreases, **the motor system nerves are unable to control movement** and coordination, and progressively more motor and gross-movement problems are experienced.

It is also believed that Parkinson's may be caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Symptoms of Parkinson's disease start very slowly and gradually becomes progressively worse over time.

Parkinson's disease affects over **1.5 million people** in the United States. It is more common in men than in women. It occurs in all races, but Caucasians tend to be more prone to developing the disease. Most people develop symptoms of Parkinson's disease around the age of 60 years old, but it can affect a small minority below this age.

Diagnosing Parkinson's Disease

The diagnosis of Parkinson's is based on the analysis of symptoms as well as a full physical and **neurological examination to rule out any other conditions** that could produce similar symptoms.

There are no specific diagnostic tests that can be performed to diagnose Parkinson's disease. Often, in older patients, the doctor may dismiss symptoms of Parkinson's disease as signs of aging. In younger patients, these symptoms may also be overlooked because they are not normally expected. A neurologist may perform the following tests to meet other criterion for a diagnosis of Parkinson's:

- CT scan (computerized tomography)
- MRI (magnetic resonance imaging)

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Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this ebook or on ANY website.

Symptoms of Parkinson's Disease

Early signs of Parkinson's disease

- Mild tremor in the fingers of one hand
- Mumbling speech that is inaudible
- An arm that does not swing when you walk
- Feeling depressed
- Trouble sleeping
- Lack of energy
- Routine tasks such as eating, showering or shaving may take unusually longer than normal

Later signs of Parkinson's disease

- Tremors or shaking in hands, fingers or legs
- Slowed motion (bradykinesia) – slow, shuffling walk with an unsteady gait and stooped posture, and legs freezing up
- Rigid stiff muscles
- Poor balance – posture becomes unstable
- Loss of automatic movements – blinking, the swinging of arms while walking, an inability to gesture and even smiling can be diminished
- Impaired speech – voice becomes monotonous and soft, and there may be trouble speaking
- Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)
- Constipation
- Urinary problems
- Excessive saliva (hypersalivation)
- Excessive sweating (hyperhidrosis)
- Dementia – affects the ability to think, reason and remember. Dementia only occurs in the later stage of this disease, although there may be memory and concentration problems earlier on

Other Conditions Resembling Parkinson's Disease

There are a number of diseases or conditions that may appear similar to Parkinson's and they include the following:

- Vascular pseudo-parkinsonism
- Progressive supranuclear palsy
- Corticobasal degeneration
- Multiple systems atrophy
- Essential tremor (ET)
- Side effects of certain drugs

What Causes Parkinson's Disease?

Parkinson's disease is caused by **the progressive loss of brain cells** (neurons) which release the chemical known as dopamine to a part of the brain (substantia nigra). The dopamine cells are essential for movement, and ensure that your muscles perform smooth, controlled movements. When the neurons become damaged or destroyed, the dopamine-producing cells drop, and **signs of Parkinson's disease** develop.



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

Environmental and Genetic Factors

Genetic

People with a first degree relative (such as a parent, child or sibling) with Parkinson's are more likely to develop the disease. The genetic causes involve abnormalities of a protein called alpha-synuclein that accumulates in degenerating neurons. The other cause is a problem with the systems in the body that dispose of unwanted proteins.

Environmental Factors

Exposure to herbicides and pesticides increases the likelihood of developing [Parkinson's Disease](#).

Medications

A number of drugs taken excessively or for long periods of time can cause the same symptoms as [Parkinson's disease](#). Medications prescribed for certain psychiatric disorders (haloperidol and chlorpromazine), nausea (metoclopramide) or epilepsy (valproate) can also have side effects similar to those of [Parkinson's Disease](#). These drugs do not cause [Parkinson's disease](#) itself but can, over time, produce the same symptoms.

Risk Factors for Parkinson's Disease

- A genetic predisposition to Parkinson's (strong inheritance pattern)
- Increases with age, especially in the middle or later years of life
- Men are more likely to develop this disease than women
- Exposure to herbicides and pesticides
- Living in a rural area or drinking well water
- Reduced estrogen levels
- Obsessive personality
- Severe emotional trauma or stress
- Previous head injury

Help for Parkinson's Disease

While there is no cure for [Parkinson's disease](#), there are **various treatment options available** which can control the symptoms and improve quality of life.

Treatment Options for Parkinson's Disease

Medication

The medication administered to a Parkinson's patient is tailored to his or her specific needs. Finding the most effective combination of medications with the least side effects often involves a period of trial and error. Some patients build up a resistance to their medication, making changes necessary from time to time. Be sure to communicate with your doctor if you have any questions, are experiencing unpleasant side effects or find that your medication becomes less effective.

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The following are some of the drugs most commonly used for Parkinson's – depending on the needs of the individual.

- Dopamine-enhancing drugs such as levodopa and carbidopa help with walking, movement and tremors. Levodopa and carbidopa are also effective in treating bradykinesia and rigidity.
- Dopamine Agonists (adjuncts to levodopa) which enhance the action of the dopamine present
- Amantadine (antiviral drug with dopamine properties)
- MAO-B Inhibitors (Dopamine is oxidized by the enzyme monoamine oxidase B and MAO-B inhibitors boost the effects of levodopa as they help to slow the breakdown of dopamine)
- Anticholinergics (adjuncts to levodopa) can help with symptoms such as excessive salivation and can enhance autonomic activity
- COMT (catechol-O-methyl transferase) Inhibitors

Surgery

Surgery is another treatment option to consider when medical treatment becomes ineffective. There are risks involved and it is not guaranteed that the symptoms will improve. Surgical procedures include:

Ablative Surgery

A heated electrode is inserted into the targeted area

Thalamotomy

Thalamotomy involves the destruction of small amounts of tissue in the thalamus

Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS)

In DBS, the targeted area is inactivated, but not destroyed, by an implanted electrode.

Transplantation or Restorative Surgery

In transplantation, or restorative, surgery dopamine-producing cells are implanted into the striatum of the brain.

Pallidotomy

An electric current is used to destroy a small amount of tissue in the pallidum (globus pallidus), a part of the brain responsible for many of the [symptoms of Parkinson's disease](#). Pallidotomy may improve tremor, rigidity and slowed movement, and can be helpful in countering the involuntary movements caused by drug therapy.

Complementary Treatment Modalities for Parkinson's Disease

- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Massage



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Natural Remedies for Parkinson's Disease

Natural therapies such as herbal and homeopathic treatments may be **very helpful for the person with Parkinson's** and can help to address a wide variety of symptoms. Make sure you speak with your doctor before adding any remedies to your prescription drugs and do not suddenly stop prescription medication without medical advice from a doctor or homeopath.

Natural remedies can help to reduce tremors, **promote the health of the brain and nervous system, improve mood and anxiety levels** – and also address problems like bladder infections, constipation and other related ailments. This can all help to reduce the individual's reliance on multiple prescription drugs.

Prognosis for Parkinson's Disease Suffers

[Parkinson's Disease](#) is **related to other disorders such as depression, substance abuse, other phobias and anxiety disorders (particularly Panic Disorder)**.

It is therefore recommended that a professional evaluation be sought, so that you can receive a proper diagnosis and treatment for any other co-existing problems.

Some Tips for Parkinson's Patients

Maintaining a quality lifestyle can be challenging and stressful for the Parkinson's patient. To cope effectively, follow these tips:

- Educate yourself about the disease so that you understand the symptoms, treatment options and various medications involved. A good relationship with your neurologist will also help you to be aware of new developments and treatments for the disease.
- Eat a well balanced diet that is high in fiber as constipation is a common symptom of the disease as well as a side effect of many of the medications.
- Exercise is important but it has to be gentle, as this increases the patient's general mobility, balance, flexibility and wellbeing. Many people find yoga very beneficial – especially with an experienced teacher who takes their condition into account.
- A support group can be very helpful, helping to share feelings with others who understand and are having the same experience.
- A strong family and support network of friends and relatives can have a positive effect on emotional health.
- Modifying the home helps to accommodate physical difficulties and improve quality of life.
- Invest in a walker or quad cane for balance and to improve walking. Use a portable tub, shower chair, multi-level hand grips and safety rails to avoid falls

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This includes formulation, acquiring and testing of raw ingredients as well as final manufacturing. This gives us the confidence to say that when you are buying a Native Remedies product, you are buying the safest and the best! We know what goes into our remedies - which is why we know what you will get out of them!

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5) We offer a free email [Ask Our Experts](#) service run by trained consultants ready to advise you on the best choice for your health.

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- Wear clothes that are comfortable and easy to slip into like sweat pants, dresses or pants with elastic waistbands. Replace buttons or zips with Velcro fasteners.
- Communicate openly with your partner about your feelings, how the disease has affected you and the rest of the family and the impact it has on your sex life
- Simple physical activities such as walking, gardening, and swimming can greatly improve one's sense of well-being.
- The slow flowing movements of Tai Chi help to maintain flexibility, balance and can provide valuable relaxation.
- Avoid driving because reflexes and perception are usually impaired during this disease.

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Some Tips for Care-Givers and Family

Caring for someone suffering from [Parkinson's disease](#) is challenging, and at times it can take its toll on you. Use these helpful tips to help you cope:

- It is important that a person with Parkinson's feels useful. Allow him or her to handle tasks that will not cause strain or be too exhausting. Offer to help if necessary – but encourage independence as much as possible.
- Stay positive and be patient. People with Parkinson's often become very depressed or grumpy about their condition. Try to be as encouraging, upbeat and optimistic as possible.
- Join a support group where you will be able to relate to others who are in a similar situation
- Keep the channels of communication open. Speak about everyday occurrences, changes in symptoms or difficulties experienced
- Noise, crowds and bright lights can often be bothersome – be aware of this when planning an outing or activity
- Stay informed. Maintain contact with the neurologist about new treatment or medication. Read about new developments in medical journals or on the internet. Research on Parkinson's is active and ongoing so it helps to keep up to date.

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The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is 'better' than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is

encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called 'alternative' or 'complimentary' medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term 'holistic' medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are 'unproven' and 'untested', the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called 'standardized' extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While 'standardized' extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have

grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

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