

# MANAGING PARKINSON'S DISEASE THROUGH EXERCISE

In partnership with POTENTRx

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## What is Parkinson's Disease?

Parkinson's disease is a chronic and progressive movement disorder. More research is needed to know more about the cause of Parkinson's disease, but it is known that Parkinson's affects neurons in the area of the brain called the substantia nigra. Some of the neurons affected produce dopamine, a chemical messenger, that communicates with the part of the brain that controls movement and coordination. When a person has Parkinson's disease these neurons malfunction or die, causing decreased motor control.

## Know Your Facts!

### Q: What are the symptoms of Parkinson's?

A: There are four motor symptoms: 1) tremor of the hands, arms, legs, and/or jaw; 2) muscle rigidity or stiffness of the limbs and trunk; 3) slowness of movement (bradykinesia); 4) postural instability. Other common symptoms include: pain, dementia or confusion, fatigue, sleep problems, depression, constipation, cognitive changes, few or anxiety, and urinary problems. Symptoms may vary.

### Q: Is there a cure for Parkinson's?

A: There is no cure for Parkinson's, however, there are medications and other types of treatments used to help manage the condition.

### Q: Is Parkinson's caused by genetics?

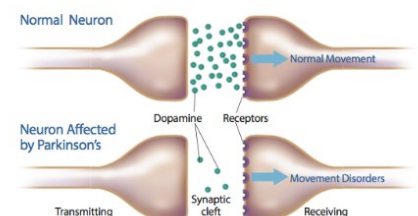
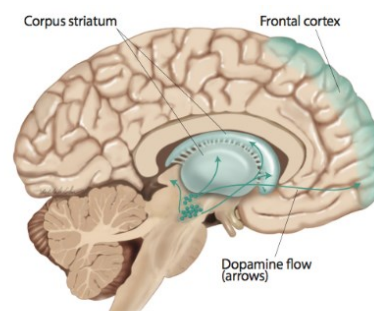
A: People with first-degree relatives affected by Parkinson's disease have a 4-9% increased risk, compared to the general population, of developing Parkinson's in their lifetime.

### Q: Is Parkinson's a fatal condition?

A: No, although Parkinson's-related complications, such as pneumonia, may be fatal. Parkinson's is a progressive condition meaning that symptoms usually become worse as time goes on. Parkinson's decreases the quality of life and eventually forces individuals to stop working, or seek assistance because of debilitating symptoms.

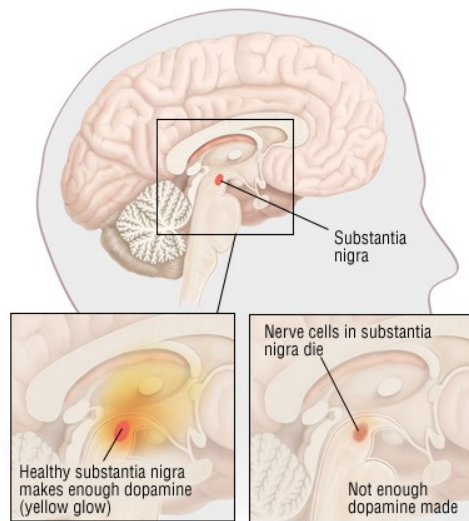
### Q: Is there anything I can do to control my Parkinson's disease aside from taking medication?

A: Yes! There are other types of treatments. Please refer to the reverse side for lifestyle changes that can help to relieve Parkinson's.



**About 1 million  
people in the  
United States are  
affected by  
Parkinson's Disease.**

*Parkinson's Disease Foundation, 2010*



## What Can Lifestyle Changes Do For Parkinson's Disease?

There are some recommended lifestyle changes to help manage Parkinson's disease—exercise (see bottom left), a healthy diet, and complementary therapies can help ease symptoms. People with Parkinson's often lose weight because of poor appetite. Focus on maintaining a well-rounded diet to obtain all necessary nutrients, and eat extra fruits and vegetables for their high fiber content to help with or prevent constipation. See pdf.org for more nutrition tips. Complementary therapies such as speech therapy and occupational therapy are helpful in easing symptoms and increasing quality of life. Speech therapy can help to increase voice volume, improve word pronunciation, improve clarity of speech, fix difficulties with swallowing, and improve nonverbal facial communications. Occupational therapy can teach people different methods of performing everyday tasks such as dressing or eating. This can help those with Parkinson's to maintain their independence.

## Factors of Parkinson's Disease

There is no known cause of Parkinson's disease.

### Modifiable Risk Factors

None.

### Non-Modifiable Risk Factors

First-degree relative affected by Parkinson's, and being over 60 years of age.

## What Can Exercise Do For Parkinson's Disease?

Flexibility and balance training can improve short-term overall function, and aerobic exercise can improve short-term walking economy. Progressive resistance training has been shown to improve short-term gait, balance, and functional mobility. Exercise can also help to relieve secondary symptoms such as depression and constipation. It is essential that exercises are performed consistently because current studies show there benefits in regards to Parkinson's are short-term. More research needs to be done on the long-term benefits of exercise for Parkinson's patients. Always consult your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

