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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-13</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>14-18</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>19-40</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>3%</td>
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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 an emergency number immediately.

**Sources:** Mayo Clinic and others. Learn more