



Hello!
HOME CARE

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE

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MAKING GETTING AROUND AND EATING EASIER

Getting Around

Canes

- Use an adjustable cane with a comfortable handgrip.
- Hiking poles can also be useful and can promote better posture if adjusted correctly. Your forearms should be roughly horizontal or 90 degrees to your body.
- Don't use a cane with three or four point bases. People living with PD often have trouble keeping all points on the floor.
- Avoid using a wooden cane if it is not sized correctly. The cane height should be as high as the break in your wrist when standing straight with arms at your side. Using an adjustable cane makes getting this just right an easy task.

Walkers

- Use a four-wheeled walker. Essential features are large swivel wheels and handbrakes. Walkers that come with a basket and a seat are most helpful.
- The standard walker is not recommended. People living with PD may lose balance when picking up the walker to move.

****Stretching, balance and posture exercises help prevent falls. Ask your physician to send you to physical therapy. Doing home exercises to help reduce fall risk is important.**



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MAKING GETTING AROUND AND EATING EASIER

Eating

- Try and schedule meals around times when the medication is working best your “on-times”.
- Sit up as straight as possible during meals. Continue to sit up straight for an extended period after finishing your meal.
- If you have difficulty swallowing try using a straw with thin liquids. This helps control the volume of water entering your mouth.
- Cut up your food into very small pieces. Don't try and force yourself to swallow the entire bite or sip. Swallow a few times per bite or sip to make swallowing easier.
- Use eating aids. Special utensils, plates and cups can make eating easier and more enjoyable.



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SOME USEFUL UTENSILS

Angled Utensils: Makes picking up food easier.



Nosey Cups: Makes drinking easier. It allows you to drink without tipping the head back.



Rocker Knife: Makes cutting food easier with a rocking motion.



The Hi-lo Scoop Plate: Helps keep food on the plate. Non-slip matting can also be used to keep the plate in place. Dycem is the name of one company that makes these products.



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MAKING TOILETING, BATHING, AND GROOMING EASIER

Toileting

- Limit caffeine intake. Caffeine in very high doses can act as a diuretic and therefore increase the frequency of urination.
- Decrease fluids either two hours before bedtime, after dinner or earlier to reduce waking up at night to use the bathroom. Sleep deprivation worsens symptoms of Parkinson's Disease.
- Put your bathroom trips on a regular schedule. Try going to the bathroom every couple of hours.
- Put a bell in the bathroom so that friends and care providers can be alerted if you need help.
- Use a bidet. A good quality bidet has both a warm water spray and dryer, which can make cleaning much easier.
- At night use a portable urinal and or bedpan if you find getting out of bed to make trips to the bathroom is too difficult.
- Incontinence products such as briefs and pads can also be helpful if you find it difficult to make it to the bathroom. Using washable pads in lieu of disposable plastic pads that go over the bed sheets can help keep the bed dry and also saves money.



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Bathing

- It is essential to use a non-skid rubber bath mat to prevent slipping.
- Using a shower stall is much easier and much safer than a shower/tub combination. If you must use a shower/tub combination, it is advisable to use a transfer bench. This is a seat that you sit on which allows you to scoot from the outside to the inside of the tub.
- Installing handrails is essential. The showering area should have at least two handrails installed. Do not use the towel rack, soap dishes, etc. for support.
- Use soap on a rope or tie one leg of a pair of nylons to the handrail and drop a piece of soap into the nylon leg. Then lather up through the nylon.
- Bring a cordless phone into the bathroom so that you can call for help in the case of a fall.



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Grooming

- Using an electric toothbrush and razor can make brushing your teeth and shaving easier.
- Use a hair dryer stand so that hair drying can be performed hands free.
- Sit down when grooming to reduce risk of falling and to conserve energy. When you are seated you can prop your elbows on the sink counter to reduce the tension on your shoulders.