



Parkinson's Disease



FAQ's

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are the symptoms of Parkinson's?

- The often debilitating symptoms include tremor, stiffness, slowness of movement, impaired balance, personality changes, weakness, stooped posture, fatigue, joint discomfort, difficulty writing, soft speech, constipation, sleep disturbance and reduced facial expression.

Q. How is Parkinson's Diagnosed?

- Neurologists diagnose Parkinson's by medical history and careful clinical examination. Often, tests are conducted to rule out other conditions, which may resemble Parkinson's.

Q. Why does Parkinson's occur?

- While researchers move closer to understanding the cause, the symptoms of Parkinson's appear when there is not enough dopamine in the brain. Dopamine is a naturally occurring chemical that allows nerve cells to transmit messages between each other and then to muscles to facilitate normal movement. For people with Parkinson's, many of these cells, contained in a part of the brain called the substantia nigra, have died -- and the remaining cells cannot produce enough dopamine.

Q. How prevalent is Parkinson's?

- Nearly **100,000 people in Canada have Parkinson's**. It affects both men and women across ethnic lines. It is more common as one travels away from the equator. It is more common in rural areas of industrialized countries and industrialized areas of rural countries. The incidence increases with age, 20% of patients may be diagnosed under the age of 50 and 5-10% under the age of 40.
- 1 in 300 people in Canada and the United States has Parkinson's.

Q. How close are we to finding a cure?

- We're making progress. Canadian research into the cause and cure for Parkinson's has contributed to remarkable discoveries, and some researchers are confident that a cure is mere decades away.

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- Call us at 1-800-565-3000 should you require access to information.

Q. What treatment is available?

- The prescribed treatment deals with the symptoms of having Parkinson's. The best symptomatic treatment options include drug therapy, surgery, and physical therapy. These options need to be explored based on how severely the symptoms of Parkinson's are interfering with day-to-day quality of life. Generally, the first method of symptom control is a combination of drug therapy and physical therapy.
- Drugs alleviate the symptoms but do not halt the progression. As symptoms advance, more medication is needed. While treatment does enable people to function better, it is not perfect and can cause side effects. Ongoing active research is focused on finding more effective treatment.

Q. What should I do if a family member, or I, display symptoms?

- Contact your doctor immediately for a very careful physical examination and assessment of family history, and follow up with the Parkinson Society Canada.

Q. What services are offered by Parkinson Society Canada?

- Parkinson Society Canada eases the burden by facilitating education, advocacy, research and support services.
- Our depth of service includes: Timely Literature, Training and Information Sharing, Access to Research, Research Grants and Fellowships, Advocacy and Lobbying, Counseling, Clinics, Caregiver Workshops, Support Groups, Peer Support Programs, Exercise Programs, Clinical Assistance, Community Outreach and Public and Corporate Fundraising.

Q. What clinics and support groups are available?

- Parkinson Society Canada maintains peer support programs operating both group and one-on-one sessions; facilitates exercise sessions to address the mobility issues of people with Parkinson's; offers Caregiver meetings and workshops and supervised sessions between caregivers and patients; orchestrates Clinical Assistance to both enhance the expertise of medical professionals and support university-based neurologists researching Parkinson's.

Q. What kind of rehabilitation is available?

- People with Parkinson's can greatly benefit by incorporating some type of physical and speech therapy into the management plan for dealing with their symptoms. Consultation with an occupational therapist can also prove beneficial in dealing with day to day living issues.
- Parkinson Society Canada provides detailed information on rehabilitation -- and all facets of Parkinson's.

Q. What annual activities can I participate in?

- In addition to donating time or money, you can participate in annual golf tournaments, buy tulips during each April Awareness Month, volunteer at a local office -- or sign up for our cornerstone event, the SuperWalk, in September. Visit the Web site at www.superwalk.com or call your local chapter for activities in your community.

Q. When was the Society formed?



- Founded in 1965, the Society is dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with Parkinson's, their families, friends and caregivers.

Q. Are there other Parkinson's affiliates across Canada?

- We are a national, not-for-profit, volunteer-based health charity with more than 100 chapters and many support groups working nationwide.

Q. What is the mandate of Parkinson Society Canada?

- Parkinson Society Canada is the national voice of Canadians living with Parkinson's. Our purpose is to ease the burden and find a cure through advocacy, education, research, and support services.
- We are a national, not-for-profit, volunteer-based charity with more than 100 chapters and many support groups working nationwide. Founded in 1965, we are dedicated to enhancing the lives of those with Parkinson's, their families, friends and caregivers.

Q. Why the name change?

- Formerly "The Parkinson Foundation of Canada", our new name heralds significant change within the organization; we are revitalized, solely focused on our mandate. "Parkinson Society Canada" better reflects our unity as an organization, our collective vision -- and our role within the Parkinson's community as a definitive resource, offering help and hope. Together, from coast to coast, our national movement will efficiently work toward easing the burden and finding a cure.

Q. Why should Parkinson's be my charity of choice?

- Parkinson's is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder, a chronic neurological disease that generally affects people in the latter half of life with symptoms such as tremor, muscle rigidity, slowness of movement, impaired speech and difficulty with balance, walking and fine movements.
- Donor dollars go to national peer-reviewed research, which will improve treatment and help us fund a cure for over 100,000 Canadians.
- Significant strides in research are providing hope that within mere decades we may see Parkinson's eradicated.
- Your contribution will help us provide advocacy and facilitate education, research and a broad range of vital services.
- Participate. Request Information. Volunteer. Donate. Together, we can do more.

Q. How can I help?

- You can make a difference through:
- A generous donation -- donor dollars go primarily to research and services, which affect households and communities across Canada; your dollars are working hard to find a cure for nearly 100,000 Canadians.
- Donations/corporate sponsorship -- inquire about our flexible recognition packages.
- Participate in any way. Walk in our SuperWalk. Buy tulips each April during Awareness Month. Volunteer. There are many ways that you can touch lives.

Q. Why is funding so important to research?

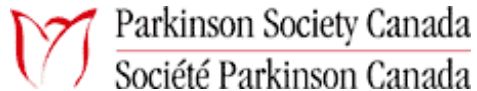
- Each time you support Parkinson Society Canada you help us fund research. Over the past five years, we have funded more than \$3 million in research -- and provided

fellowship grants to over 60 recipients.

- Important projects are taking place investigating wide-ranging areas such as stem cell research, genetic understanding, drug therapies and mobility issues.
- We encourage you to learn more about what Parkinson's is -- and what it means to people who are diagnosed with this condition.



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