

WHAT IS PARKINSON'S DISEASE?

3 out of 5 Americans Will Suffer From a Nervous-System Disease Such as Parkinson's or Alzheimer's

The Exact Cause of Parkinson's Disease is Unknown but Both Genetics and Environment are Involved

According to the National Parkinson Foundation, Parkinson's Disease (PD) is a neurodegenerative brain disorder that progresses slowly. A person's brain slowly stops producing a neurotransmitter called dopamine. With less and less dopamine, a person has less ability to regulate their movements, body and emotions.

What are the risk factors and symptoms? How is Parkinson's Disease diagnosed? And what is the treatment for PD? The following summary has been developed to provide answers to these questions.

01 | The Role of Genetics and Environment

The majority of PD cases are not directly inherited. Approximately 15-25% report having a relative with the disease. If a person's parent has Parkinson's Disease, his or her chances of developing the disease are 4-9% higher than the risk among the general population. Researchers have discovered gene mutations linked to Parkinson's Disease, but the mutation only occurs in a small number of families.

Scientists have also suggested a correlation between environmental toxin/injury and PD. Identified factors linked to Parkinson's Disease include well water, manganese and pesticides.

02 | Symptoms

The symptoms of Parkinson's Disease vary from person to person and begin very gradually and tend to go unnoticed until they become more severe. In many cases, one side of the body is affected more dramatically than the other.

Most people associate Parkinson's Disease with tremors; however, you should be aware of other common symptoms, including:

- Slowed movement
- Rigid muscles
- Impaired posture and balance
- Loss of automatic movements
- Changes in speech and handwriting

03 | Diagnosis and Treatment

A neurological and physical examination, along with blood and imaging tests will be used to identify Parkinson's Disease. After diagnosis, your healthcare professional will develop a treatment plan which may include medications that work with dopamine levels in the brain and provide symptom relief, physical and speech therapy and, in some cases, deep brain stimulation.

Working with your healthcare team and having a support system in place at home are critical to the successful management of PD. For more information, please visit: <http://www.pdf.org/>

Did You Know?

Parkinson's Disease is caused by the death of dopamine cells

References

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/parkinsons-disease/basics/definition/con-20028488>

<http://www.parkinson.org/understanding-parkinsons/what-is-parkinsons>

<https://medlineplus.gov/parkinsonsdisease.html>