

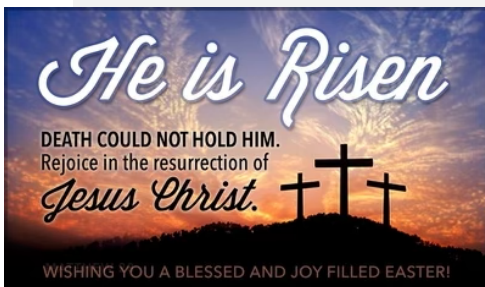
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Five Steps to Keep Your Kidneys Healthy and Strong

Overview

March is National Kidney Month and the National Kidney Foundation is calling on everyone to take five healthy steps for their kidneys.

The kidneys are the body's chemical factories, filtering waste and performing vital functions that control things like red blood cell production and blood pressure. But over time, the kidneys can become damaged with little or no physical symptoms to warn you that your kidneys are in trouble.

According to the National Kidney Foundation, 26 million American adults estimated to have kidney disease, most don't know they have it. That's why taking care of your kidneys, especially if you are at risk for kidney disease, is so important. Here are a few simple things people can do to keep their kidneys healthy and strong.

Keeping Your Kidneys Healthy

Everyone can do 5 simple things to protect their kidneys:

1. **Get Tested!** Ask your doctor for a urine test or a GFR blood test annually if you have diabetes, high blood pressure, are over age 60, or have a family history of kidney failure (GFR is a glomerular filtration rate that checks how well your kidneys are working).



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2. **Reduce NSAIDs.** Over the counter pain medicines, such as NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), may alleviate your aches and pains, but they can harm the kidneys, especially if you already have kidney disease. Reduce your regular use of NSAIDs and never go over the recommended dosage.
 3. **Cut the Processed Foods.** Processed foods can be significant sources of sodium, nitrates and phosphates, and have been linked to cancer, heart disease and kidney disease. Try adopting the DASH diet to guide your healthy eating habits.
 4. **Exercise Regularly.** Your kidneys like it when you exercise. Regular exercise will keep your bones, muscles, blood vessels, heart and kidneys healthy. Getting active for at least 30 minutes a day can also help you control blood pressure and lower blood sugar, which is vital to kidney health.
 5. **Control Blood Pressure and Diabetes.** High blood pressure and diabetes are the leading causes of kidney disease and kidney failure. Managing high blood pressure and strict control of blood sugar levels can slow the progression of kidney disease. Speak with your doctor if you are having trouble managing diabetes or high blood pressure.

Kidney Facts

- 1 in 3 American adults is at high risk for developing kidney disease today. High blood pressure, diabetes, a family history of kidney failure and being over 60 are major risk factors for developing kidney disease.
- 1 in 9 American adults has kidney disease — and most don't know it.
- Early detection and treatment can slow or prevent the progression of kidney disease.
- Kidney disease risk can be reduced by controlling blood pressure and blood sugar, quitting smoking, regular exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, and avoiding excessive use of pain medications

What is a Comprehensive Metabolic Panel (CMP)?

A CMP is a simple and safe blood test. The test provides important information about your body's chemical balance and metabolism, which is the way in which your body uses food and energy. Some of the tests included in the CMP provide information about your:

- Kidneys
- Electrolytes
- Calcium
- Protein
- Liver
- Blood sugar

Getting a CMP can be part of a routine check-up or if your healthcare professional suspects liver or kidney disease. Since kidney disease has few symptoms in its early stages, frequent testing is the best way to catch it, so requesting this test is a great way to keep a better eye on your kidney function and overall health.



National Nutrition Month 2024-March 1 – March 31



Description

National Nutrition Month® is an annual campaign established in 1973 by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. During the month of March, everyone is invited to learn about making informed food choices and developing healthful eating and physical activity habits.

This year's theme is "**Beyond the Table**," which addresses the farm-to-fork aspect of nutrition, from food production and distribution to navigating grocery stores and farmers markets. It also describes the various ways we eat and includes sustainability.



The path to wellness often begins at our plates. National Nutrition Month stands as a testament to the profound impact of making informed food choices and developing sound eating habits. This annual observance not only promotes nutritional knowledge but also emphasizes the vitality of a



balanced lifestyle. Come, let's delve into a month brimming with healthful insights and culinary adventures.

What is National Nutrition Month?

National Nutrition Month is a dedicated campaign focusing on the significance of nutrition and health. It seeks to educate individuals about the importance of making informed food choices, developing consistent eating habits, and undertaking regular physical activity. Spearheaded by nutrition professionals and enthusiasts, the month offers a myriad of resources, events, and initiatives to promote a healthier lifestyle for all.

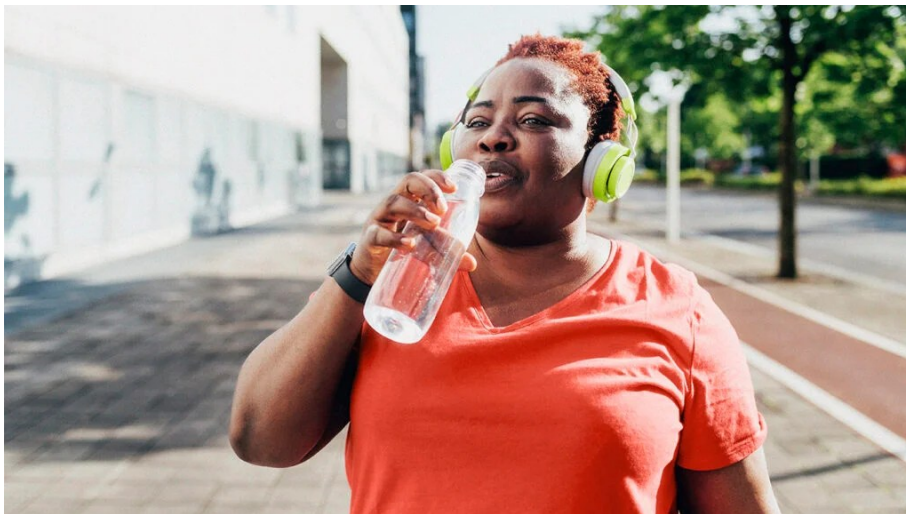
Does drinking water help you lose weight? Benefits and amount

Hydration is key for many factors involved in weight loss, including digestion and muscle function. To stay hydrated, females need around 9 cups of water per day and males need around 13 cups. Drinking adequate water may help people lose weight.

Researchers are still unsure why drinking more water helps a person to lose weight, but many studies show some positive correlation between increased water consumption and weight loss.

This article outlines six reasons that drinking water may help a person lose weight. It also looks at how much water a person should drink each day.

Water is a natural appetite suppressant



When the stomach senses that it is full, it sends signals to the brain to stop eating. Water can take up space in the stomach, leading to a feeling of fullness and reducing hunger.

A person may also think they are hungry when they are actually thirsty. Drinking a glass of water before reaching for something to eat can help curb unnecessary snacking.

In an older 2014 study, 50 overweight females drank 500 milliliters (mL) of water 30 minutes before breakfast, lunch, and dinner, in addition to their regular water consumption, for 8 consecutive weeks.

The participants experienced a reduction in body weight, body fat, and body mass index (BMI). They also reported appetite suppression.

A study from the previous year yielded similar results.

Water increases calorie-burning

Some research indicates that drinking water can help to burn calories.

In another 2014 study, 12 people who drank 500 mL of cold and room temperature water experienced an increase in energy expenditure.

They burned 2–3% more calories than usual in the 90 minutes after drinking the water.

Water may also temporarily increase the body's resting energy expenditure or the number of calories burned while resting.

Drinking cold water may further enhance water's calorie-burning benefits because the body expends energy, or calories, by heating up the water for digestion.

Water helps to remove waste from the body

When the body is dehydrated, it cannot correctly remove waste as urine or feces.

Water helps the kidneys to filter toxins and waste while retaining essential nutrients and electrolytes. When the body is dehydrated, the kidneys retain fluid.

Dehydration can also result in hard or lumpy stools and constipation. Water keeps waste moving by softening or loosening hardened stools.

Water also helps the body to recover from digestive problems, such as diarrhea and indigestion.

When waste builds up in the body, people may feel bloated, swollen, and tired. Bloating can add inches to a person's waist.

Staying hydrated is a good way to avoid retaining waste, which may add a few extra pounds.

Drinking water can reduce overall liquid calorie intake

It is easy to accumulate liquid calories by drinking soda, juice, or sweetened coffee or tea.

Many people also ignore how many calories they consume in sports drinks or alcoholic beverages.



Replacing even a few high-calorie drinks each day with water or other no-calorie beverages, such as herbal tea, may have long-term weight loss benefits.

In a study from 2015, female participants drank 250 mL of water after lunch each day while attending a 24-week weight loss program. They lost 13.6% more weight than people in the same program who drank the same volume of diet beverages after lunch.

Another study involved 15,765 adults without obesity at the start of the study. They replaced one sugar-sweetened beverage or beer per day with water. Using mathematical models, the results showed that this small change related to a higher incidence of weight loss and less obesity over 4 years.

Water is necessary to burn fat

Without water, the body cannot properly metabolize stored fat or carbohydrates.

The process of metabolizing fat is called lipolysis. The first step of this process is hydrolysis, which occurs when water molecules interact with triglycerides (fats) to create glycerol and fatty acids.

Drinking enough water is essential for burning off fat from food and drink, as well as stored fat.

A mini-review from 2016 found that increased water intake led to increased lipolysis and a loss of fat in animal studies.

Water helps optimize workouts

One of the most important components of any weight loss plan is exercise.

Water helps muscles, connective tissues, and joints to move correctly. It also helps the lungs, heart, and other organs to work effectively as they ramp up activity during exercise.

Being hydrated reduces the risk of things that can get in the way of a good workout, such as muscle cramps and fatigue.

Always drink water before, during, and after exercise to avoid dehydration.

Keeping water close at hand is essential, especially if exercising in hot, humid, or very sunny conditions.

How much water do you need to drink?

There is no standard recommendation for how much water to drink. Some people require more or less water, depending on a variety of factors, including:

- activity level
- age
- body size
- temperature
- humidity
- sun exposure
- health status



The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics suggests estimates for the total water required daily. Most people get around 20% of their required fluid intake from food. The table below shows estimates of how many cups of water males and females need per day from food and drinks combined and from drinks alone.

	From food and beverages	From beverages alone
Fluid per day for females	11.5 cups	9 cups
Fluid per day for males	15.5 cups	13 cups

It is important to note that some beverages can be dehydrating, so do not count toward a person's daily fluid intake. Examples include sugar-sweetened and alcoholic beverages.

National Poison Prevention Week – March 17-23



National Poison Prevention Week is observed during the third week of March every year and exists to highlight the risk of being poisoned by household products. Take a peek under your kitchen sink or in your laundry room and there'll be tons of stuff that could be dangerous. Household cleaning agents, prescription medications, pesticides, and other items can pose serious hazards to the health and well-being of our families and even our pets. National Poison Prevention Week is here to raise awareness of these dangers and to make sure we are all mindful of what lurks in our own homes.

History Of National Poison Prevention Week

National Poison Prevention Week was established by Congress in 1961 with the aim of creating awareness and lowering the number of unintentional poisonings. The first National Poison Prevention Week was observed in March 1962 under the presidency of John F. Kennedy.



Over 2 million potential poisonings are reported in the U.S every year, with over 90% of these occurring in the home and the majority of them being young children. Every day over 300 children require treatment in an emergency department, with an average of two deaths per day being recorded. Most of these incidents revolve around highly toxic household items such as cleaning products and medicine.

In 1962 the National Poison Prevention Week Council was established to oversee National Poison Prevention Week. They focus their energies on partnering with other agencies such as the National Safety Council and the American Cleaning Institute to try and be more effective in their awareness campaigns.

National Poison Prevention Week FAQs

Are there any housekeeping tips to prevent poisonings?

There are always things we can do at home to implement poison control. Useful tips include cleaning out your medicine cabinet periodically, keeping all chemicals out of sight from children, and keeping all items in its original container.

Where can I get more information on preventing poisonings?

For more information, reach out to your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222. You'll make a bigger difference for you and your family by doing your part.

When is National Poison Prevention Week?

National Poison Prevention Week is the third week of March every year.

Five Facts About National Poison Prevention Week

1. Poisons pose a threat of widespread danger

About 30 children die every year from being poisoned by common household items, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

2. They're also a source of close calls and worry

The Consumer Product Safety Commission also reports that accidental poisoning accounts for more than 2 million calls each year to poison control centers and more than 80,000 visits to the emergency room.

3. Effective advocacy and education can help

National Poison Prevention Week contributed to an 80 percent reduction in poison-related deaths since the early 1970s.

4. There's a particularly ominous threat out there

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that has no color or smell. Cars, appliances, furnaces, and other household items can emit carbon monoxide.

5. Poison control centers are always available

Someone calls a U.S. poison control center every 12 seconds. Poison centers are here 24/7 to help and support us when poisonings happen, but to prevent them at all costs.



National Minority Health Month

A banner with a blue background and a purple-to-blue gradient at the bottom. The text "NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH MONTH" is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH MONTH

April is National Minority Health Month (NMHM), a time to raise awareness about the importance of improving the health of racial and ethnic minority communities and reducing health disparities. Learn more about NMHM.

About National Minority Health Month

Celebrated every year in April, National Minority Health Month:

- Builds awareness about the disproportionate burden of premature death and illness in people from racial and ethnic minority groups.
- Encourages action through health education, early detection and control of disease complications.

The origin of National Minority Health Month was the 1915 establishment of National Negro Health Week by Booker T. Washington. In 2002, National Minority Health Month received support from the U.S. Congress with a concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 388) that “a National Minority Health and Health Disparities Month should be established to promote educational efforts on the health problems currently facing minorities and other populations experiencing health disparities.” The resolution encouraged “all health organizations and Americans to conduct appropriate programs and activities to promote healthfulness in minority and other communities experiencing health disparities.”



World Health Day

Every April 7, the World Health Organization chooses to highlight a special theme current in the wellness and medical world.

Every April 7, the World Health Organization chooses to highlight a special theme current in the wellness and medical world. Ranging from mental health to insurance and everything in between, this day sets the tone for what's to come in the world stage. This year's World Health Day will shine a light on nurses and midwives, the on-the-call, restless workforce that revolutionized the healthcare industry as we know it today.



Around the world, the right to health of millions is increasingly coming under threat.

Conflicts are devastating lives, causing death, pain, hunger and psychological distress.

The burning of fossil fuels is simultaneously driving the climate crisis and taking away our right to breathe clean air, with indoor and outdoor air pollution claiming a life every 5 seconds.

The WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All has found that although at least 140 countries recognize health as a human right in their constitution, only 4 countries have mentioned how to finance it.

To address these types of challenges, the theme for World Health Day 2024 is 'My health, my right'.

This year's theme was chosen to champion the right of everyone, everywhere to have access to health services, education, and information, as well as safe drinking water, clean air, good nutrition, quality housing, decent working and environmental conditions, and freedom from discrimination.



National Autism Awareness & Acceptance Month



What is Autism ?

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them.

It is a spectrum condition, which means that, while all people with autism share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways.



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National Child Abuse Prevention Month



Doing Things Differently: Moving from the Challenge to the Change

National Child Abuse Prevention Month recognizes the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect. Prevention services and supports developed by this collaboration can help parents, other caregivers, and communities protect children and strengthen families.

Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect occurs when a child is mistreated, resulting in injury or risk of harm. Types of child abuse and neglect are identified within four categories. The definitions include a brief summary of indicators to explain the definition. None of the indicators alone are definitive of child abuse. It is necessary to look at the family's total functioning to determine present and impending danger.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse refers to an action of the parent, guardian or custodian that is non-accidental and results in physical injuries, often occurring in the name of discipline or punishment.

Bruises and Welts

- On face, lips, mouth
- On torso, back, buttocks, thighs



-
- In various stages of healing
 - Clustered, forming regular pattern
 - Reflecting shape of article used to inflict; electric cord or belt buckle
 - On several different surface areas; regularly appear after absence, weekend or vacation
 - Subdural hemorrhage or hematomas
 - internal injuries
 - brain damage

Burns

- Cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks
- Immersion burns; sock-like, glove-like, doughnut shaped on buttocks or genitalia, patterned like electric burner, iron
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso

Fractures

- To skull, nose, facial structure in various stages of healing
- Multiple or spiral fractures
- bone fracture-unexplained and in various stages of healing

Lacerations or Abrasions

- To mouth, lips, gums, eyes
- To external genitalia

Behavioral Indicators

- Behavioral extremes; aggressiveness or withdrawal
- Frightened of parents
- Afraid to go home
- Reports injury by parents

Physical Neglect

Physical neglect occurs when a parent, guardian or custodian fails to provide for a child's basic needs, like food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care or supervision and abandonment. The failure to meet basic needs must represent a threat to the child's immediate health and safety or an impending danger if there is a pattern or history of the child's needs not being met.



Physical Indicators

- The child is malnourished, emaciated, is always hungry or begging for food, or is seldom fed nutritious food. A medical diagnosis is usually necessary to determine malnutrition.
- The child's clothing is inappropriate or insufficient to protect the child from the weather or clothing is so dirty or smelly that it constitutes a health hazard.
- The caretakers fail to provide a home or the home is in a condition that presents a health hazard or dangers such as fire.
- The caretakers refuse to permit a child to attend school. Truancy alone does not constitute child abuse or neglect but may be an indication when considered with other family factors.
- The caretakers fail to seek medical or dental treatment for a health problem or condition that, if untreated, could represent a danger to the child.
- The caretakers fail to provide supervision of a child. The child's age and competence, amount of time left unsupervised, time of day the child is unsupervised, and degree of parental planning for the unsupervised period must be considered. Community standards need to be considered when making judgments concerning lack of supervision.
- The child is abandoned. Abandonment is a legal term meaning contact with the child has not been attempted by the caretaker for an extended period of time.

Behavioral Indicators

- Begging, stealing food
- Extended stays at school; early arrival and late departure
- Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep in class
- States there is no caretaker

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse and exploitation occurs when a parent, guardian or custodian commits, or allows contacts or interactions between a child and adult, where the child is used for the sexual stimulation of the parent, guardian, caretaker, or other responsible person. Sexual abuse may also be committed by a person under the age of 18, when that person is significantly older than the victim, or in a position of power and control over the child.

Physical Indicators

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Pain or itching in genital area
- Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas
- Venereal disease, especially in pre-teens
- Pregnancy



Behavioral Indicators

- Unwilling to change for gym or participate in physical education class
- Withdrawal, fantasy or bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge
- Poor peer relationships
- Delinquent or runaway behavior
- Reports sexual assault by caretaker

Emotional Abuse

Emotional maltreatment occurs when a parent, guardian or custodian fails to provide the emotional nurturing needed for a child's psychological growth and development, or willfully denies the child the emotional stability necessary for proper psychological growth and development. Emotional maltreatment results in an observable or measurable impairment of the child.

Physical Indicators

- Failure to thrive is diagnosed. The child does not gain weight or meet developmental norms, despite adequate feedings and absence of physiological causes. Failure to thrive is caused by failure to emotionally nurture, cuddle and hold the child, such as leaving the child in a crib all day. The clearest indicator of failure to thrive is the placement of a child in another environment, where the child dramatically gains weight and thrives.
- The caretaker verbally abuses the child, such as constant harassment, belittling, humiliation, repeated threats or constant criticism.
- The caretaker condones, suggests or encourages the child to commit theft or prostitution.
- The child is ignored or isolated by parents physically and emotionally for long periods of time. An example includes a child who is sent to an empty room for hours or days to be isolated from the rest of the family.
- The child is placed in a position of acting as a parent to an extremely needs or inadequate parent.



Parkinson's Awareness Month educates people about early detection, raises money for research and initiatives, and helps people who live with or care for those with Parkinson's feel seen and valued.

Parkinson's is a progressive condition for which there is currently no cure. It is the second most common neurodegenerative condition in the United States, behind Alzheimer's disease.

Parkinson's Awareness Month is marked with events meant to increase visibility for those who live with the condition, as well as honor researchers, medical teams, family members, and others who care for those living with Parkinson's.



The color gray is often associated with Parkinson's, and those working to increase awareness for people with Parkinson's as well as their loved ones, will often wear a gray ribbon during April.

There is no national Parkinson's Day currently recognized in the United States, but World Parkinson's Day is observed around the world on April 11.

Parkinson's Facts

- According to the Parkinson's Foundation, more than 10 million people live with Parkinson's disease worldwide.
- The risk for Parkinson's increases with age. The average age of onset is 70.
- People assigned male at birth are twice as likely to develop Parkinson's than those assigned female at birth.
- Approximately 90,000 people are diagnosed each year in the United States.
- It's estimated that by 2030, 1.2 million people in the United States will receive a Parkinson's diagnosis.
- Research has shown a link between environmental toxins and chemicals and Parkinson's.

Who's at Risk for Parkinson's Disease?

Anyone can get Parkinson's, but certain groups of people have a higher risk than others.

Age

The primary risk factor for Parkinson's is age. Only 4% of people with the condition are diagnosed before they turn 50. The risks go up with older age. The average age that symptoms begin is 70.

Research from the Parkinson's Foundation states that the rates of diagnosis in the United States are increasing dramatically. The researchers speculate that this is due to the aging of the population as a whole.

Sex

A person assigned male at birth is twice as likely to receive a Parkinson's diagnosis than someone assigned female at birth. The condition's symptoms can sometimes look a little different across sexes, too.

Genetics

Parkinson's has a strong genetic component. It's estimated that 15–25% of people with Parkinson's have someone in their family with the condition.

There are also specific genetic mutations that are linked to Parkinson's.

Toxic exposure

Exposure to certain chemicals may increase your Parkinson's risk.



People who live in the “rust belt states” where industrial manufacturing is concentrated are diagnosed at higher rates.

This seems to suggest certain manufacturing toxins can activate Parkinson’s. People who live in rural areas with high pesticide use may also have an elevated risk.

Head injuries

People who have had traumatic brain injuries appear to be more likely to develop Parkinson’s later in life.

What are the early symptoms of Parkinson’s?

Learning the early symptoms of Parkinson’s is a great way to become more aware of what living with the condition can look like. The trademark symptoms of Parkinson’s include:

- tremors and trembling
- muscle stiffness
- slowness and loss of balance
- an uneven gait

When Parkinson’s first develops, it can be so mild that your symptoms aren’t noticeable. Symptoms of what’s known as stage 1 Parkinson’s may be confined to one side of your body.

It can take months or even years for the condition to progress to stage 2 when symptoms become more noticeable.

As the condition becomes worse, Parkinson’s moves through several additional stages. Stage 5 is considered the most severe.

How is Parkinson’s diagnosed?

Getting screened for Parkinson’s is a great way to increase your awareness of the condition. It also lets you talk with your doctor about your specific risks. However, be aware that there’s no blood or lab test that can screen for Parkinson’s.

Doctors will typically conduct a neurological exam to determine if you have the condition. Diagnostic tools, such as MRIs, may be used to evaluate your symptoms.

Parkinson’s can resemble several other neurological conditions, so it may take several doctor’s visits to confirm a Parkinson’s diagnosis.

Is there a cure for Parkinson’s disease?

There is currently no cure for Parkinson’s disease. Current treatment strategies include:

- Medications: Medications to treat Parkinson’s may increase dopamine levels in the brain or slow its breakdown. They may also manage symptoms of involuntary movement. Classes of medications involved in Parkinson’s treatment plans include:
 - dopamine agonists



- enzyme inhibitors
- anticholinergic drugs
- **Deep brain stimulation (DBS):** This treatment requires surgery to implant tiny electrodes in your brain. Pulses are then released to the electrodes. These pulses block certain neurons and are believed to help your brain maintain a state of equilibrium.
- **Physical and occupational therapy:** Physical and occupational therapists can help you learn strategies to improve your strength and coordination. These therapies aim to help people with Parkinson's maintain their ability to be active and independent for as long as possible.

II Early Warning Signs of Parkinson's



These can include the following:

Tremor (Resting): This symptom is typically seen in about 70% of cases as the first sign that something is going on. The term “resting” is used because the person is doing just that, resting, and has a tremor present. This is different from a “purposeful tremor” that is seen when some individuals attempt to perform a task. A resting tremor usually starts as one finger, hand or foot moving (on one side of the body) with the inability to control or stop it. This tremor usually stops on its own though when a person begins an action.

Slow Movement: The medical term for this is known as Bradykinesia. This is a true feature of Parkinson's that defines it from other disorders. With this symptom, a person appears abnormally still. This includes movement related to walking, repetitive actions and even facial expression. Eventually, it affects the ability to complete daily living activities (buttoning a shirt or brushing teeth) and speech.

Rigid Muscles: The muscles involved usually are located in the neck, shoulders and legs. The person will experience stiffness that does not let up. The limbs will remain rigid and arms do not swing as normal when walking. This rigidity can be uncomfortable and at times quite painful.

Unstable Posture: People with Parkinson's have various changes in their muscles and movement that limit their ability to maintain proper balance. They have a tendency to be unstable when standing upright. A person with Parkinson's has lost some of the reflexes needed for maintaining an upright posture, and may fall backwards even if slightly bumped.

Secondary Motor Symptoms associated with Parkinson's Disease are present as the disease progresses. Just like many other diseases, Parkinson's is considered chronic. This means that it is a long term condition for which there is treatment available but not a cure. The Primary Motor



Symptoms continue (which may become worse) and they then are following by the secondary symptoms listed below:

Inability to Start Movement: Also referred to as “freezing.” This happens when a person with Parkinson’s tries to move and can’t. You see this often when they are trying to take a step to walk. This is sometimes called the Parkinsonian Gait or Shuffle.

The person typically appears hunched over (leaning slightly forward at the waist), and the knees bend back and forth between the two legs. Once they can initiate a step it is very stuttered. They tend to take short steps without lifting the feet much. Arms are at the sides without movement and any turns are made with numerous steps in the same manner without lifting the head.

Micrographia: Small handwriting. This is the result of slowing movement and the inability to complete repetitive actions.

Mask: A symptom that makes the person appear as if they are wearing a mask. Lack of unconscious expression or a blank or motionless stare.

Accelerations: It should be noted that some people with Parkinson’s experience acceleration of movements and actions instead of slowing. This is typical with speech. This person speaks rapidly and stammers, making it very difficult to understand them. This may also be present when walking. This is referred to as festination. It is an uncontrollable acceleration in pace/gait leading to an increased risk of falling.

The brain changes caused by Parkinson’s disease begin in a region that plays a key role in movement. As Parkinson’s brain changes gradually spread, they often begin to affect mental functions, including memory and the ability to pay attention, make sound judgments and planning the steps needed to complete a task. These symptoms are called Non Motor Symptoms. While a person’s family and friends may not be able to see them, these “invisible” symptoms can actually be more troublesome for some people than the motor impairments. These changes include the following:

Sensory Changes: Changes related to the different senses include a decreased sense of smell, vision and dental problems (increased salivation) and skin disturbances.

Cognitive Issues: These include memory difficulties, slowed thinking, confusion and in some cases, dementia.

Sleep Disturbances: Many Parkinson’s Disease patients report difficulties sleeping.

If a person has one or more of these symptoms, it does not mean that they will develop Parkinson’s, but these markers are helping scientists to better understand the disease process. Some other troubling changes can include constipation, decreased blood pressure when standing up, bladder problems, sexual dysfunction, mood changes, depression, fatigue, weight loss or gain, fear and anxiety and impulsive behavior.

That brings us to the question of, what do we know about Parkinson’s Disease and where are we with current research? Despite decades of research, we still do not know exactly what causes this disease. Without a known cause(s) it is very difficult to develop a cure. There are several theories that include genetics and or environmental exposure.



Final Thoughts

At this point, genetics has not been ruled out but is not a strong contender. There has not been any substantial evidence identifying a gene and people with the disease report just a 15-25% association with a family member with Parkinson's. To date, no case has been directly linked to heredity.

A second theory that scientists have, is that Parkinson's disease may result from exposure to an environmental toxin or injury. Some research studies have discovered several factors that may be linked to Parkinson's. These include rural living, well water, manganese and pesticides.

One important factor you should know is that simple exposure to an environmental toxin is never enough to cause Parkinson's. Most people that have been exposed to a toxin do not develop the disease. In fact, there is no definitive evidence that any environmental factor, alone, can be the cause of this disease.



256.766.9958

info@tmbcal.org

606 S. Marietta Street
Florence, AL 35630

Resources:

<https://socialpresskit.com/nnm2024>

<https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/national-nutrition-month-2024/>

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/19-ways-to-eat-healthy-on-a-budget>

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/322296>

<https://nationaltoday.com/national-poison-prevention-week/>

[https://www.nimhd.nih.gov/programs/edu-](https://www.nimhd.nih.gov/programs/edu-training/nmhm/#:~:text=April%20is%20National%20Minority%20Health,communities%20and%20reducing%20health%20disparities)

[training/nmhm/#:~:text=April%20is%20National%20Minority%20Health,communities%20and%20reducing%20health%20disparities](https://www.nimhd.nih.gov/programs/edu-training/nmhm/#:~:text=April%20is%20National%20Minority%20Health,communities%20and%20reducing%20health%20disparities)

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