

PARKINSON'S DISEASE AND NUTRITION

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a progressive disorder of the nervous system caused by a loss of nerve cells. Patients with PD have a reduced production of Dopamine, a chemical which helps with movement. This reduced levels of Dopamine results in impaired body function, poor coordination and problems in walking and moving.

SYMPTOMS

These may vary from one person to the other and may include the following:

- Drooling
- Stooped postures
- Limited facial expression
- Shaking and tremors
- Loss of fine hand movements.
- Difficulty in swallowing (dysphagia)
- Disturbed bowel movement

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There is no treatment for Parkinson's disease but symptoms can be better managed for an improved quality of life with medication, diet and exercise.

Dietary requirements for Parkinson's may vary from patient to patient and a physician must be consulted for proper guidance on every day needs. Taking medications 30-60 minutes before or after meal along with low protein snack like crackers or biscuits is found to aid medicine absorption.

THERAPEUTIC APPROACH FOR NUTRITION

The recommended diet for patients of Parkinson's disease lies in the therapeutic approach. This is to prevent excessive weight loss or gain with a balanced diet with adequate fluid and fiber intake. Pharmaconutrient interactions (protein and levodopa) may also be considered.

EATING RIGHT WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Some tips for eating right with Parkinson's disease include:

- Modify consistency of foods as needed for safe chewing and swallowing.
- Provide supplements, thickeners, or other products as needed.
- Discuss alternative (tube) feeding as necessary.
- Adjust flavors and seasonings of foods to maximize enjoyment and encourage adequate intake.
- Do not mix hot and cold foods.
- Avoid fried, greasy or sweet foods.
- Eat slowly and eat smaller, more frequent meals
- Sip slowly and drink at least 8 cups of liquid every day.
- Use assistive devices like smart spoon, to ease in having food.



References:

- <http://parkinson.org/Living-with-Parkinsons/Managing-Parkinsons/Diet-and-Nutrition>
<https://www.movementdisorders.org/MDS.htm>