

LIVING WITH PARKINSON'S

WHO SHOULD BE ON YOUR TEAM?

The ideal model of care for a person living with Parkinson's is person-centred and family-focused, with the individual and their family supported by a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals.

The following practitioners can all positively contribute to helping people live with Parkinson's. Are they on your team?



GENERAL PRACTITIONER (GP)

Your GP is usually the first medical professional you see for a health issue. GPs are not necessarily experts in Parkinson's; however they will be able to assess any symptoms you are experiencing, provide a treatment option or refer you to a specialist.

If they suspect you have Parkinson's, they will refer you to a neurologist. Your GP can also work with you to create a Chronic Disease Management plan.

This plan enables people living with a chronic condition (including Parkinson's) to receive five rebated sessions with allied healthcare providers per calendar year and up to 10 sessions with a Mental Health Professional.

FREECALL INFORMATION LINE

1800 644 189

NEUROLOGIST

A Neurologist is a specialist physician who diagnoses and treats neurological conditions (conditions of the brain, spinal cord and nerves). There are neurologists who specialise in movement disorders such as Parkinson's.

A Specialist Neurologist will be familiar with the many different presentations of Parkinson's and be able to identify the best treatment options.

PARKINSON'S NURSE

A Parkinson's nurse has specialist experience, knowledge and skills. They provide advice and support and can recommend symptom management strategies. As Parkinson's progresses, they can offer guidance on managing medication and refer you to other healthcare professionals for more specialist advice.

There are very few Parkinson's nurses available currently, however nurses working in chronic disease management programs such as Hospital Admission Risk Programs (HARP) may be able to assist with referral to other members of the multidisciplinary team.

PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Physiotherapists use exercise and other forms of physical therapy to help keep people mobile. They undertake an assessment to see how Parkinson's affects physical movement, from which they may recommend exercises to improve muscle strength and flexibility, improve balance and prevent falls and help with pain management.

Physiotherapists are important healthcare professionals who can assist in keeping you mobile and reducing falls. Physiotherapists are the best healthcare professionals to recommend and prescribe the most suitable walking or mobility aid, if required.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

Occupational Therapists can help people with Parkinson's stay independent for longer and carry on doing the work and leisure activities important in their lives. They can undertake home and workplace visits and can suggest easier ways to do tasks that have become difficult, suggest changes to make your home safer and recommend mobility and aids to help keep you independent.

SPEECH PATHOLOGIST

Speech Pathologists can help make communication easier for people with Parkinson's. They can also help with swallowing and saliva difficulties. They specialise in all areas of communication, including facial expressions, body language, speech and fluency.

The Speech Pathologist may suggest exercises and techniques to strengthen your voice, help you control your facial expression and suggest communication aids if talking has become very difficult for you.

NEUROPSYCHOLOGIST

A Neuropsychologist is a psychologist who specialises in understanding how the brain's structures and systems relate to behaviour and thinking. They evaluate and treat people with various types of nervous system disorders, including Parkinson's, which can affect how people feel, think and behave.

A Neuropsychologist's exam can also provide a baseline to help them determine disease progression and cognitive (thinking) and memory function.

SOCIAL WORKER

Social Workers are trained to help people with the social, emotional and financial challenges of life. Sometimes these challenges can become much greater when you are diagnosed with Parkinson's.

In many cases, Social Workers can be an excellent source of counselling. They can also provide practical assistance with regards to matters involving housing, employment, money, relationships and care.

DIETICIAN

Constipation and weight loss can result from Parkinson's. Food can also interfere with medication absorption. A Dietician may suggest eating choices to ensure a balanced and healthy diet, help you coordinate medications with meals and help people maintain a healthy weight.



**Information provided by Parkinson's Victoria
providing help for today and hope for tomorrow.**

CONTACT US

health information line: 1800 644 189
email: info@parkinsons-vic.org.au
web: parkinsonsvic.org.au