

PARKINSON'S 101

Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder that affects the nervous system and movement. It involves the loss of dopamine-producing neurons in the brain, though the exact cause of their death remains unknown.

Dopamine plays a key role in helping motor signals travel from the brain to the body, and when those signals are disrupted, it leads to problems with movement and coordination.

If the signals get "stuck" or can't find an open pathway, we lose motor initiation and motor control, leading to symptoms such as:

Parkinson's Disease Symptoms



Signs of a Cognitive Deficit

- Difficulty keeping track of medications, paying bills/balancing checkbook, following recipes, or completing other daily life tasks
- Increased forgetfulness
- Getting lost going to familiar places

Signs of Speech/Language Deficits

- Difficulty expressing wants and needs clearly
- Increased frustration when trying to communicate
- Difficulty with word-finding
- Increasing slurred speech, others often having difficulty understanding your speech

It is important to time your therapy or your exercise sessions around what time you take medication. Practicing big movement tasks can be easier when your medication is at peak effectiveness.

How can physical therapy help?

- ✓ Gait training (auditory, visual, base of support and step length, use of a walker)
- ✓ Balance Training
- ✓ Motor Control
- ✓ Posture