
How Parkinson's disease affects your body

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder that affects predominantly dopamine producing neurons in a certain area of the brain called Substantia Nigra. Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects movement of different parts of the body. It comes along slowly, starting with barely a tremor in one hand. While a tremor may be the most well known sign of Parkinson's, the disorder also causes stiffness or slowing of movement. In the early stages of Parkinson's disease your face may show little or no expression or your arms may not swing when you walk. Your speech may become soft or slurred. The main causes of parkinson's can be certain nerve cells in the brain slowly break down or die.

Many of these are due to a loss of neurons that produce a chemical messenger in your brain called dopamine. When dopamine levels decrease, it causes abnormal brain activity. The actual cause for parkinson's is unknown, but there is some causes that may contribute to it. Many scientists have identified that certain genetic mutations can cause parkinson's. Certain triggers also could be a cause for Parkinson's. Being exposed to certain toxins may increase the risk of getting Parkinson's disease. Another cause could be tumors of specific substances within brain cells are markers of Parkinson's disease. These are called Lewy bodies, and scientists believe these Lewy bodies hold an important part to the cause of Parkinson's disease.

Risk factors like aging, heredity, sex and exposure to toxins could lead to Parkinson's disease also. Parkinson's disease symptoms could be different among people. Symptoms could be a tremor, slowed movement, rigid muscles, and speech changes. Tremor could be the shaking of a limb often in your hand or fingers. You may notice a back and forth movement, making simple tasks difficult and time consuming. A slowed movement could make simple tasks difficult. Rigid muscles is stiffness may occur in any part of your body. The stiff muscles can limit your range of motion and cause you pain. You may have speech problems as a result of Parkinson's disease. You may have a slur or hesitate before talking. Your doctor will diagnose Parkinson's disease based on your medical history, a review of your signs and symptoms, and a neurological and physical examination.

Your doctor may order tests like blood test to rule out other conditions that may be causing your symptoms. Imaging tests such as MRI, ultrasound of the brain, SPECT and PET scans may also be used to help rule out other disorders. Parkinson's disease can't be cured, but medications can help control your symptoms. Medications may help you manage problems with walking, movement and tremor. These medications increase or substitute for dopamine.

Different kinds of medications may include: Carbidopa- Levodopa, Carbidopa-levodopa infusion, and dopamine agonists. Carbidopa-levodopa is the most effective parkinson's disease medication. It is a natural chemical that passes into your brain and is converted to dopamine. Side effects may include nausea or lightheadedness. Carbidopa-levodopa infusions is administered through a feeding tube that delivers the medication in a gel form directly to the small intestine. Dopamine agonists helps with quick relief to help the tremors. There is also surgical procedures that can be used to treat this disease. Deep brain stimulation surgeons implant electrodes into a specific part of your brain. The electrodes are connected to a

generator put in your chest near your collarbone that sends electrical pulses to your brain and may reduce your Parkinson's disease symptoms.

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