

Patient advice sheet

Parkinson's service

Information for people who have recently received a diagnosis of Parkinson's from their Neurologist.

What is Parkinson's?

Parkinson's is a progressive neurological condition for which there is currently good treatment, but no cure. The symptoms most associated with Parkinson's are tremor, rigidity (stiffness) and slowness of movement. Sometimes thinking can be affected. Not everyone with Parkinson's experiences the same combination of symptoms – they vary from person to person. There are about 40 different motor and non-motor symptoms in total but no-one experiences them all.

Parkinson's is caused by the gradual loss of dopamine-producing cells in the brain. Why these cells die is not fully understood, but researchers believe that it may be the result of a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Treatment of Parkinson's is based on replacing the missing dopamine using medication, which serves to mask the symptoms.

Exercise has a vital role in maintaining your abilities and may even slow the progression of the condition.

Many people have difficulty maintaining a positive outlook immediately after being diagnosed. These feelings usually pass but if they persist please get help from your GP or Parkinson's Nurse Specialist.

Many people with Parkinson's adapt to lead active and fulfilling lives. An important part of coping with Parkinson's is understanding how it affects you individually, working around your symptoms and managing your condition as best you can with the support of specialist healthcare professionals and local voluntary organisations.

Support with your condition

The Bucks Parkinson's Service is here to support you in a range of different ways.

Your neurologist and Parkinson's Nurse Specialist will help you to monitor your symptoms and adjust your medication.

Our team of physiotherapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists and dietician can help you to maximise your abilities if/when you need them.

In the weeks following your diagnosis you will receive notice of a future appointment from the Parkinson's Nurse Specialist who will assess your individual needs and refer you on to other services if required.

The Parkinson's Nurse Specialist will also signpost you to a range of exercise groups, gyms and support groups available through the voluntary sector.

Top tips for managing Parkinson's

1. Keeping physically, mentally and socially active helps you to stay positive
2. Regular exercise is a vital part of the treatment for Parkinson's
3. Eating a healthy diet and having good sleep habits will help your symptoms
4. Take your medication on time as directed by your GP or Parkinson's Nurse Specialist
5. Parkinson's symptoms do not suddenly get worse. If you experience this contact your GP or Parkinson's Nurse for advice. The most common reasons for this are infections, constipation or stress/anxiety
6. Always bring an up-to-date list of your medications to every hospital appointment or if admitted to hospital bring your medication with you
7. Seek support: there are many types of help (see below), so find the support which suits you best.

Who to contact

Parkinson's Nurse Specialists at Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

- Christine Parker: 07867 557806 (covers north Buckinghamshire)
- Amy Richards: 07866 173684 (covers south Buckinghamshire)

Parkinson's UK – national charity

- Website: www.parkinsons.org.uk
- Free, confidential information and support. National helpline number: 0808 800 0303
- Local advisors: Gill Wills gwillis@parkinsons.org.uk 0344 225 3773 (north Bucks) and Anita Browne abrowne@parkinsons.org.uk 0344 225 3675 (south Bucks)

Advice and support groups

- Amersham & High Wycombe Branch of Parkinson's UK
 - www.parkinsonsahw.org.uk 0300 030 4667
- Aylesbury Branch of Parkinson's UK
 - www.aylesburyparkinsons.org.uk
 - Email hello@aylesburyparkinsons.org.uk
- Chinnor – Live well social group
 - Mandy French: 07701 099458, email: mandyfrench@talktalk.net
- Parkinson's Cafés
 - Winslow – Liz Mostyn: 07508 330750
 - Amersham, Chesham, Beaconsfield, Hazlemere and Marlow – rosie.brown@parkinsonsahw.org.uk 07514 027883
- Chilterns Neuro Centre – info@chilternsneurocentre.org 01296 696133

First steps

- [First Steps](#) is a 2-day course run by Parkinson's UK for newly diagnosed people to meet and discuss their diagnosis with others who have been recently diagnosed and with healthcare professionals. Contact firststeps@parkinsons.org.uk 02079 639381

For advice on managing anxiety, depression and stress

- Healthy Minds Bucks: 01865 901600, www.healthymindsbucks.nhs.uk