

## Fight Parkinson's Services and Supports

As a leading organisation for Parkinson's, providing research, education and support, Fight Parkinson's is constantly working to realise possibilities for people living with Parkinson's.

Over the last 40 years, we have greatly improved the quality of life for people living with Parkinson's, including Young Onset Parkinson's, and Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP), Multiple System Atrophy (MSA) and Cortico Basal Syndrome (CBS).

Parkinson's is a progressive, degenerative neurological condition that mainly affects a person's control of their body movements. It's not contagious or fatal – a person cannot die from Parkinson's. It's thought to be genetic in a very small percentage of cases.

### Fight Parkinson's Services

At Fight Parkinson's, our community is at the forefront of all we do. We believe that with strong sector coordination and leadership and greater community and government support, we can realise better outcomes.

Our multi-disciplinary health team can be contacted Monday-Friday from 9am-5pm on 1800 644 189 and provides specialist advice and support to people living with Parkinson's, their families, carers and healthcare professionals through:

- tailored health education programmes and seminars
- a free and confidential health information service

- comprehensive web-based information
- an extensive peer support group network
- system navigation support.

We are committed to raising funds to advance research that will deliver effective therapies, treatments and a cure and by empowering our community to live full and active lives until a cure is found.

### Where to get help

- Fight Parkinson's: 1800 644 189
- Your doctors – GP or Neurologist
- Allied Healthcare professionals
- Supports and services via My Aged Care 1800 200 422 or National Disability Insurance Scheme 1800 800 110
- Carer Gateway: 1800 422 737
- The Brain Foundation: 1300 886 660

### Help for carers of people with Parkinson's

Being a carer for a person who has Parkinson's can be difficult. A wide range of agencies can provide help and support, including counselling, carer education, information and carers support groups. Carers are welcome to attend Fight Parkinson's Peer Support Groups.

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Let's change lives - and fight for a world free of Parkinson's, because together we can.

**If you need to talk to someone, call our free confidential health information line on 1800 644 189**

## Incidence of Parkinson's

There is an estimated 219,000 people living with Parkinson's nationally. One in five of these people are diagnosed before the age of 50. Local and international research indicates that the number of people living with Parkinson's is increasing rapidly.

## Causes of Parkinson's

At present, we do not know the cause of Parkinson's disease. In most people there is no family history of Parkinson's. Researchers worldwide are investigating possible causes, including:

- environmental triggers, pesticides, toxins, chemicals
- genetic factors
- combinations of environment and genetic factors
- head trauma.

## Diagnosis and management of Parkinson's

There are no readily available diagnostic tests for Parkinson's. In 2023 researchers identified two biomarkers that were able to effectively diagnose Parkinson's, currently these are only used for clinical research. Scans, x-rays and blood tests may be used to rule out other conditions. For this reason, getting a diagnosis of Parkinson's may take some time.

No two people with Parkinson's disease have exactly the same symptoms or treatment. Your GP or Neurologist can help you decide which

treatments to use. People can manage their Parkinson's symptoms through:

- seeing a doctor who specialises in Parkinson's
  - medication
  - multidisciplinary therapy, provided by Nurses, allied healthcare professionals and Counsellors
- Deep Brain Stimulation surgery (for some).

## Symptoms of Parkinson's

The type, number, severity and progression of Parkinson's symptoms vary greatly. Every person is affected differently. Some of the main symptoms are:

- resting tremor (shaking in a body part when it is at rest)
- rigidity (muscle stiffness)
- bradykinesia (slowness of movement)
- freezing (experiencing a sudden inability to move)
- stooped posture
- shuffling gait
- micrographia (small handwriting)
- apathy
- fatigue
- sleep disturbance
- loss of sense of smell
- depression
- blood pressure fluctuation
- constipation

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Fight Parkinson's is a leading source of specialised health information and advice services. Through research, education and support, we strive to improve the lives of people living with Parkinson's, PSP, MSA and CBS.

Any medical information provided is for general information purposes only. You should always talk to your treating doctor and qualified healthcare providers for personal medical and health-related instructions.

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