



S.T.A.H.L. NEWS

STUDENTS TALKING ABOUT HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

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May 2021

Parkinson's Disease Awareness

The aim of Parkinson's Awareness Day is to raise awareness of Parkinson's disease, promoting a great understanding of this condition and how it can affect a person.

Parkinson's is a disease in which nerve cells that deliver the neurotransmitter dopamine to other cells are reduced in numbers. As cell death spreads to ever larger parts of the brain more centers are affected. This results in an aggravation of motor and non motor disorders.

- Nearly one million will be living with Parkinson's disease (PD) in the U.S. by 2020, which is more than the combined number of people diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and Lou Gehrig's disease
- Approximately 60,000 Americans are diagnosed with PD each year.
- More than 10 million people worldwide are living with PD.
- Incidence of Parkinson's disease increases with age, but an estimated four percent of people with PD are diagnosed before age 50.
- Men are 1.5 times more likely to have Parkinson's disease than women.

Parkinson's signs and symptoms

- **Tremor.** A tremor, or shaking, usually begins in a limb, often your hand or fingers.
- **Slowed movement (bradykinesia).** Over time, Parkinson's disease may slow your movement, making simple tasks difficult and time-consuming.
- **Rigid muscles.** Muscle stiffness may occur in any part of your body.
- **Impaired posture and balance.** Your posture may become stooped, or you may have balance problems as a result of Parkinson's disease.
- **Loss of automatic movements.** You may have a decreased ability to perform unconscious movements, including blinking, smiling or swinging your arms when you walk.
- **Speech changes.** You may speak softly, quickly, slur or hesitate before talking. Your speech may be more of a monotone rather than have the usual inflections.



Risk Factors

- **Genes.** Researchers have identified specific genetic mutations that can cause Parkinson's disease.
- **Environmental triggers.** Exposure to certain toxins or environmental factors may increase the risk
- **Age.** Young adults rarely experience Parkinson's disease. It ordinarily begins in middle or late life, and the risk increases with age.
- **Heredity.** Having a close relative with Parkinson's disease increases the chances that you'll develop the disease. .
- **Sex.** Men are more likely to develop Parkinson's disease than are women.

Stages of Parkinson's

Stage One: During this initial stage, the person has mild symptoms that generally do not interfere with daily activities. Tremor and other movement symptoms occur on one side of the body only. Changes in posture, walking and facial expressions occur.

Stage Two: Symptoms start getting worse. Tremor, rigidity and other movement symptoms affect both sides of the body. Walking problems and poor posture may be apparent. The person is still able to live alone, but daily tasks are more difficult and lengthy.

Stage Three: Considered mid-stage, loss of balance and slowness of movements are hallmarks. Falls are more common. The person is still fully independent, but symptoms significantly impair activities such as dressing and eating.

Stage Four: At this point, symptoms are severe and limiting. It's possible to stand without assistance, but movement may require a walker. The person needs help with activities of daily living and is unable to live alone.

Stage Five: This is the most advanced and debilitating stage. Stiffness in the legs may make it impossible to stand or walk. The person requires a wheelchair or is bedridden.