



Parkinson's Disease Rehabilitation Program



Our goal is to help people with Parkinson's disease stay as active as possible. We work with each patient to develop and implement a therapy plan designed to maximize potential and complement medical interventions.

About Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a neurodegenerative brain disorder in which a person's brain slowly stops producing a neurotransmitter called dopamine. As dopamine production slows, a person has less and less ability to regulate his/her movements, body and emotions.

Early symptoms of PD may be subtle and occur slowly over time. In the early stages, a person may feel mild tremors or have difficulty getting out of a chair. Simple tasks and regular activities may take longer to complete. There also may be changes in speech or handwriting.

Loss of Function and Common Problems

Symptoms of PD usually begin on one side of the body, but it eventually affects both sides. Some of the most common problems experienced by patients with PD include:

- Slowed movement, also known as bradykinesia, which makes simple tasks and daily activities difficult and time-consuming
- Difficulty with balance and posture
- Muscle stiffness that limits range of motion
- Changes in speech, including slurred speech or hesitating before speaking
- Changes in writing
- Difficulty in swallowing

- Difficulty with sleeping
- Pain, fatigue and depression
- Fear, anxiety and decreased motivation
- Problems making decisions

Parkinson's disease affects every person differently and treatment and rehabilitation vary from individual to individual. Our therapists are experts in providing individualized, specialized and advanced PD rehabilitation. Patients can be referred for rehabilitation after a hospital stay or directly admitted from their home.

Researchers found that those with less severe Parkinson's disease who took part in an exercise program that was recommended and assessed by a physical therapist **saw a 70% reduction in falls, compared with those who continued with their usual care.**

Canning, C., *Exercise for falls prevention in Parkinson disease*, Neurology, 2015 Jan 20. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4335992/>





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Our Rehabilitation Team

Our therapists work hand-in-hand with doctors and nurses who specialize in rehabilitation. Members of the team may include physical, occupational and speech therapists, as well as social workers and nutritional counselors.

Our care team meets regularly to monitor patient progress and response to treatment. Discharge planning begins upon admission and involves the patient, caregivers and the entire rehabilitation team to ensure a smooth transition to home or to another level of care if appropriate.

Rehab in the Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation Setting or Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospital

We offer a comprehensive inpatient program that includes physical, occupational and speech therapies. Physical therapy is critical in managing Parkinson's disease. Most exercise routines for Parkinson's focus on strengthening and flexing all limbs, stretching legs and feet, walking and balance.

Our occupational therapists can help with managing self-care activities such as dressing and bathing as well as everyday activities such as home management. We can help people with Parkinson's relearn how to think about their movements to

plan one step at a time as well as teaching energy conservation techniques. These activities will help keep the body flexible and keep the blood moving.

Our speech therapists can improve voice volume, quality and articulation through facial and breathing exercises and training (specific exercises) to gain better control in swallowing. For example, therapeutic exercises, such as verbalizations and tongue movements, often can make a difference. When speech is severely impaired, a machine or computer-generated voice can be used.

Caregiver Support

We know the critical role caregivers and family members play in helping their loved ones with Parkinson's. We also know it can be stressful at times. Our care team offers support and information to help caregivers and other loved ones understand the disease and how to best help their loved one. They also will help direct caregivers to the right resources so they can get help and support when they need it.

Contact Us for More Information and to Request a Patient Assessment.