

Parkinson's disease with dementia

About the condition

Parkinson's dementia is a condition that some people can experience as their Parkinson's progresses. It affects thinking and memory and can have a big impact on different aspects of life.

Dementia symptoms are caused by a significant loss of brain function. There are different forms of the condition and each person will experience dementia in their own way.

There is a similar condition called dementia with Lewy bodies.

Dementia-like symptoms may be caused by other problems, like depression or side effects of medication. It is important to discuss these with the GP or Parkinson's nurse, who would be able to help.

Changes that might happen

Everyone experiences Parkinson's dementia in different ways. Symptoms can include:

- memory problems, concentration and slow thought processes
- communication and finding the right word and names can be a problem
- decision making, planning activities or solving problems
- everyday activities such as dressing, cooking and shopping
- changes in appetite, energy levels and sleeping patterns. This can affect motivation and interest in things they previously enjoyed
- depression and anxiety. Some people may find it difficult to control their emotions

- visual hallucinations and delusions, which can be managed with medication.

Things to consider

Any symptom should be discussed with the GP. Early diagnosis is crucially important, in order to access the right medication and support, and to plan for the future. There is no cure for dementia, but the symptoms can be managed.

Medication

After a diagnosis of Parkinson's dementia, the GP or Parkinson's nurse may review the Parkinson's medication, as some side effects may make dementia symptoms worse. Sometimes it is necessary to find a balance between controlling the Parkinson's and the dementia symptoms.

Help from other professionals

There are other professionals who can help. The GP or Parkinson's nurse can refer patients to Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists (OT), Dieticians and Social Workers. They can also provide information about local services.

Legal matters

If diagnosed with Parkinson's dementia, the person may want to make some important decisions about the future, regarding finances and preferences on medical and social care. They may also want to choose someone to handle their affairs, and make this a legal agreement, such as a Power of Attorney.

Caring for someone with Parkinson's dementia

Someone diagnosed with Parkinson's dementia may need support from family and friends with things like shopping, housework and cooking. In this case, the person with dementia will be entitled to receive Attendance Allowance or Personal Independent Payment (PIP), which will help provide some financial support.

If someone is dedicating a lot of time providing support as an unpaid carer, they may be entitled to claim Carer's Allowance.

Useful information

Parkinson's UK –Dementia and Parkinson's:
www.parkinsons.org.uk/dementia

Carers UK

www.carersuk.org

Tel: 0808 808 7777

Email: advice@carersuk.org

Parkinson's UK – Helpline:

Tel: 0808 800 0303

Monday to Friday: 9am-7pm,

Saturday: 10am-2pm (Closed Sundays/Bank Holidays)

Email: hello@parkinsons.org.uk



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