

MANAGEMENT

Medical management options will depend on availability and location and include:

- Private neurologist
- Public neurology clinics
- Parkinson's or Movement Disorder clinics

A good relationship with a General Practitioner for ongoing monitoring and support is essential. Fostering a good relationship with a local pharmacy will assist with monitoring of medications and access to medications even in times of shortage.

Collaboration with the medical profession with regard to treatment is the preferred option for those living young and living well with Parkinson's. Opinions vary on the timing of introducing Parkinson's medication and will depend on the impact of symptoms on quality of life.

Regular medical reviews are recommended – these usually occur on a six monthly or annual basis.

It is ideal that autonomy is maintained along with collaboration with medical specialists. The person living with the condition (and their families) must be encouraged to be self-directed in other areas of management. Maintaining an active healthy lifestyle is recommended.

**CONTACT YOUR STATE ASSOCIATION
FOR DETAILS OF LOCAL SUPPORT SUCH
AS A COUNSELLOR OR PARKINSON'S
NURSE SPECIALIST**



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IN THIS TOGETHER
parkinson's
AUSTRALIA

FREE CALL 1800 644 189

Prepared in collaboration with:

- Parkinson's ACT - www.fightingparkinsons.org.au
- Parkinson's NSW - www.parkinsonsnsw.org.au
- Parkinson's QLD - www.parkinsonsqld.org.au
- Parkinson's SA/NT - www.fightingparkinsons.org.au
- Parkinson's TAS - www.parkinsonstasmania.org.au
- Parkinson's VIC - www.fightparkinsons.org.au
- Parkinson's WA - www.parkinsonswa.org.au

inbrief

LIVING YOUNG, LIVING WELL WITH PARKINSON'S



DIAGNOSIS

It is a common misunderstanding that Parkinson's affects only older people. Out of the approximately 50 people diagnosed each day in Australia several will be under the age of 50 and 20% of those living with Parkinson's are of working age.

Younger people who are diagnosed with Parkinson's often have different attitudes and expect to lead a more active lifestyle than those diagnosed at an older age. It is essential that this active group continue with their lifestyle and attitude in the face of their diagnosis.

Being diagnosed with Parkinson's can be confronting. Reactions to the diagnosis may vary from fear to anger, however for many it may come as a relief to have the answer to vague symptoms which may have been present for some time.

Coming to terms with the diagnosis is an individual journey which requires patience, support and accurate information. This equips the person and their family for a positive outlook on life with Parkinson's.

Support can be accessed through groups of people in a similar situation – for example a Young Onset Support Group.

A degree of caution should be exercised in accessing information through the internet. Accurate information is available through state Parkinson's Associations, Shake It Up Australia, Parkinson's Australia, American Parkinson's Disease Association, Parkinson's UK and European Parkinson's Disease Association websites.

The Michael J Fox Foundation is an excellent resource for those seeking information for those who are newly diagnosed and young onset.

LIFESTYLE FACTORS: LIVING WELL

EXERCISE

Recent studies suggest that exercise may slow the progression of Parkinson's.

The role of exercise in living well with Parkinson's is now identified as essential. In order to maintain mobility, posture and quality of life, regular exercise should be incorporated into a daily routine. The type of exercise is irrelevant but ideally it should be enjoyable, safely achievable, and take symptoms and fatigue into consideration.

Combining aerobic, strength and balance exercise programmes is recommended.

Consideration should be given to involving the allied health team (physiotherapist, exercise physiologist, occupational therapist and speech and swallowing therapist) even at this early stage. Suggestions for therapy and home exercise programs will form a helpful basis for the years to come.

There are several exercise programmes aimed at the younger and more active population, e.g. PD Warrior® and LSVT Big®. These are available through the private sector and online.

DIET

A healthy diet with emphasis on fibre and fluids is desirable. If possible, constipation should be avoided by natural measures.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is not strictly contraindicated. However, moderation is recommended as the effect on medications may vary. In addition balance, clarity of speech and thinking issues may be impacted by smaller amounts of alcohol than previously tolerated.

EMPLOYMENT

Being diagnosed with Parkinson's can result in a re-evaluation of future employment plans. The ability to continue working will depend on the type of employment and financial implications.

Research suggests that many younger people with Parkinson's retire sooner than originally anticipated. This is often due to the stress in meeting deadlines, keeping up with the pace of work and associated anxiety.

Advice from a financial advisor, employment officer or Centrelink may be helpful. Appropriate legal and financial advice is recommended prior to discontinuing work to ensure access to benefits and entitlements. Some insurance policies include trauma insurance which may be applicable to a diagnosis of Parkinson's.

Having a diagnosis of young onset Parkinson's may mean that one could fit the eligibility for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Visit www.ndis.gov.au for further details.

Early retirement can lead to increased travel opportunities and these should be enjoyed with confidence. Many airlines and hotels have provision to support the needs of customers who may have mobility or additional needs.

Parkinson's is a long-term condition. With regular medical reviews, appropriate medication regimes, exercise and a positive attitude good quality of life is achievable. Ongoing support of family and friends and maintaining social contact is essential.