



LIVING WELL WITH PARKINSON'S

Summer 2022

Building Your Comprehensive PD Care Team

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You may have heard it before: "an interdisciplinary care team is the best approach to Parkinson's care". But who is included in this team? What does each care team member do? At the start, it may be that your primary care doctor and neurologist/movement disorders specialist are the only two people you need on your care team. However, over the years, as your needs evolve, your team may grow to include numerous providers. Below are some professionals you might consider who can help you live well with Parkinson's every day.



A **movement disorder specialist (MDS)** is a neurologist with additional training in movement disorders. Your MDS will most likely be the person on your medical care team who is most familiar with the full spectrum of Parkinson's medications and treatments. If you cannot find an MDS close to you, you might consider travelling as you may only need to see your MDS in person once or twice a year, or seeing them via telehealth. Some people choose to have a local neurologist they see regularly and an MDS they follow up with intermittently.

Your **primary care physician (PCP)** will play an essential role in problems unrelated to Parkinson's, monitor your general health, and make sure you stay up-to-date on preventive medical screening tests. You should see your PCP regularly to stay current on your medical issues, detect new issues, and prevent future problems.

Nurses are important and are often the first line of access. If your question or concern is a problem they cannot solve, they know who on the team can.

Physical therapists (PT) can help you improve strength, flexibility, and mobility, and it can also decrease stiffness and pain related to Parkinson's. Early after your diagnosis, they can teach exercises that address any current weaknesses, which will allow you to stay stronger and mobile for longer. By getting an assessment early, your PT will be able to see how your Parkinson's is progressing over time so they can give you exercises to address areas that may be getting weaker.

Occupational therapists (OT) enable people of all ages to live life to its fullest by helping them promote health and prevent or live better with injury, illness, or disability. OT interventions focus on adapting the environment through modifications, modifying the task, teaching a skill, and educating the person, care partner, and family to increase participation and ability to perform daily activities. OT focuses primarily on activities that are important and meaningful to you.

Speech language pathologists, or speech therapists, can help you speak loudly, pronounce words clearly, speak fluidly, and show facial expression. These rehabilitative professionals can also help you with eating, swallowing issues, saliva management, dry mouth, drool, and more.

Neuropsychologists specialize in the relationship between behavior and brain function. Cognitive impairment and behavioral complications such as depression, anxiety, and apathy can be some of the earliest symptoms people with Parkinson's notice. If you do, a great first step to treatment is to get evaluated by a (...continues on page 2...)



Support Groups!

The Department of Neurology currently hosts 3 support groups:

PD Patient Support Group.

Meets the last Tuesday of every month. **NOW VIRTUAL!!**

Care Partner Support Group

Meets the first Wednesday of every month. **NOW VIRTUAL!!**

Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) monthly info-session. **NOW VIRTUAL!!**

For more information and to register please contact Elizabeth Delaney, LCSW at 212-305-5779.



LEADERS IN RESEARCH

New Frontiers in Research and Care!

Join the Parkinson's Foundation to learn how research shapes PD treatments and care strategies. Hear the latest updates about current and breaking research from Parkinson's experts!

When: June 21, 2022, 1:30PM-3:30PM

Where:

Moise Safra
Community Center
130 East 82nd Street
New York, NY 10028

[REGISTER HERE](#)

neuropsychologist who specializes in neurological disorders. They can assess your thinking skills, including memory, attention, reaction time, language, and visual perception. They will also assess your emotional functioning.

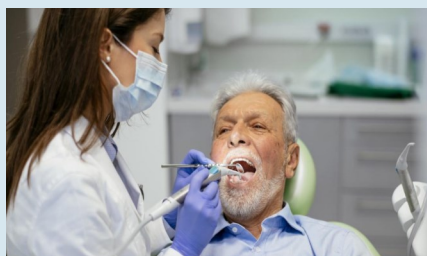
Psychologists, social workers, and counselors are professionals who focus on emotional health and well-being. Counselors, social workers, and psychologists are trained to assess emotional difficulties and work with you and your doctor to promote good mental health. They can also help you manage stress and serve as guides for both you and your family, helping you to respond with resilience to changes you hadn't anticipated.

Psychiatrists are medical doctors who specialize in mental health. They are qualified to assess both the psychological and physical aspects of psychological problems and prescribe medication.

Spiritual counselors/chaplains provide support and hope you need to embrace your future, whether within the construct of traditional religions or through other forms of spiritual expression. If faith is part of your life, a pastor, chaplain, rabbi, or other spiritual advisors can help you find peace, discover meaning, and accept life changes within the comfort and context of your beliefs.

Pharmacists are also a key person in the care team whom you will see often! They will know all the medications you take — those that are related to Parkinson's and those that aren't — they will be on the lookout for medication interactions that your primary doctor may not always be aware of. Whenever you're prescribed a new medicine, be sure to ask your pharmacist if there's anything you need to know about how it might interact with other meds you're taking. Pharmacists can also advise about crushing pills, splitting doses, easy-open bottles, and more.

Registered dietitians can help find the best nutritional strategy for you. It is preferred that you see a registered dietitian (RD) specializing in working with people with Parkinson's or other neurological disorders. RDs are usually the most qualified health professionals on nutrition and dietetics, unless your primary care doctor, neurologist, or movement disorder specialist specializes in that field.



Dentists can provide care that is even more critical to the PD population. That's because Parkinson's can impact the mouth and jaw and make dental care more challenging. During regular dental exams, often scheduled every six months, your dentist can check for cavities, plaque, tartar, and gum disease and ensure that you are properly caring for your oral health.

Dermatologists should be seen to screen for Melanoma, one type of skin cancer that has been consistently linked to Parkinson's. Because melanoma is treatable if caught early but can be dangerous if not detected until the later stages, it's crucial that people with Parkinson's focus on skin protection and regular skin cancer screenings.

Eye care professionals provide regular eye exams which are essential for screening for eye diseases and preserving your vision. There are several different types of eye physicians: **ophthalmologists**, medical physicians who have completed four years of medical school followed by four years of residency training in ophthalmology; **optometrists**, healthcare providers who complete physician training in optometry but who have not attended medical school; and **neuro-ophthalmologists**, who are neurologists or ophthalmologists with expertise in visual symptoms from neurologic disease.

You, your care partner, and your family need a support system that will be in place for the duration of your journey with Parkinson's; so, do not wait to reach out and start adopting a holistic approach. Create a team of providers who can offer expertise in many different areas who will listen, respect your input, and with whom you feel comfortable.

Pulled from Davis Phinney Foundation for Parkinson's webpage

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[www.columbianeurology.org/
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disorders](http://www.columbianeurology.org/patient-care/movement-disorders)

Wish to Donate?

A gift of appreciated stock that you have held for over one year is a tax-wise, strategic option to help support our clinical, research and patient care activities.

Here is why: If you sell the stock, you pay taxes on the gain you have realized. But if you give the stock to Columbia for the Division of Movement Disorders there are three benefits:

- No capital gains tax is due.
- The gift is eligible for an income tax charitable deduction for the full value of the stock if you itemize your tax return.
- You provide critical resources to sustain our important work.

Please contact Matt Reals, Senior Director of Development, at 212-304-7203 or mr3134@columbia.edu

"Don't count the days, make the days count."

-Muhammad Ali, diagnosed with PD in 1984