

PD Health Care Team

Family Doctor/General Practitioner (GP)

- Looks after your general medical care, annual physical examinations, and acute problems
- May be the first person to identify/diagnose/ treat your Parkinson disease (PD)
- May refer you to a general neurologist or a movement disorders neurologist (specialist)
- If you see a specialist, he/she will maintain communication with your GP

General Neurologist

- A referral from your GP is needed to see a neurologist
- Has 5 years of extra training in general neurology
- Treats a wide range of neurological conditions including headaches, migraines, dizziness, multiple sclerosis, “nerve” problems and many other conditions, may have an interest in PD
- May make or confirm a diagnosis of PD, recommend treatment and monitor your response
- May follow you on a regular basis, typically at least once every 6 – 12 months
- May act as a “consultant” with your GP. Your GP will manage your medications and consult with the neurologist if/when you experiences problems with your medications

Movement Disorders Neurologist

- A referral from your GP is needed to see a movement disorders neurologist
- Has 5 years of extra training in neurology AND 2 years extra training in movement disorders
- Makes or confirms a diagnosis of PD, recommends treatment and monitors your response
- Expert in PD care, most up-to-date information on treatment, education and research options
- Follows you on a regular basis, typically at least once every 6 – 12 months, more often if needed
- Often works as part of an interdisciplinary team (ie: Movement Disorders Clinic/Program)

PD Clinical Nurse

- Located in a Movement Disorders Clinic/Program and has specialty training in PD
- Provides education and counselling for all aspects of PD and how it affects your life, with ongoing care and help between clinic visits via telephone contact or “nurse only” clinic visits
- Acts as a bridge between you and the doctor, particularly with medication concerns
- Communicates with other health care team members to ensure optimum care

Psychiatrist

- Requires a referral from a GP or your neurologist
- Has 5 years of extra training in disorders that affect the mind
- Diagnoses and treats mental disorders that can occur in PD – depression, anxiety, disturbances in thought and cognitive processes and behaviours
- Treatments may include psychotherapy, marital/family counselling and medication

Psychologist

- Trained to help you cope with the emotional impact of chronic illness and other issues

- Techniques may include psychotherapy and behavioural modification, among others
- Some are associated with hospitals and clinics (where services are paid for by Alberta Health Care); some are in private practice where costs may be covered by extended benefit insurance plans

Physiotherapist/Physical therapist

- Assesses, diagnoses and treats difficulties with movement and daily function by prescribing therapeutic exercise and customized plans to improve mobility for daily life
- Helps to prevent and manage pain
- Uses education/techniques/equipment to help you stay well and/or improve physical health

Speech Language Pathologist (SLP)

- Helps you speak clearly, loudly and smoothly; organize your thoughts to communicate; gain and maintain a healthy voice; and chew and swallow safely
- Tests for language, speech, voice, resonance, fluency and swallowing disorders

Occupational Therapist

- Addresses problems in the area of self-care, work and leisure
- Provides advice and instruction on adaptive equipment, safety awareness, energy conservation and mobility issues. Assesses home situations and can provide appropriate guidance for equipment purchase/home adaptation

Social Workers (SW)

- Help with social, emotional, financial and family concerns related to your illness
- Trained in individual, family/marital counselling to address many of the changes that often occur while adjusting to a major medical illness, including long-term care arrangements
- Help connect you with the appropriate resources in your community

Massage Therapists

- Provides short term relief from muscle stiffness and rigidity
- Based in private practice rather than in hospitals and are not covered by Alberta Health Care
- Some extended benefits provide some coverage for their services

Nutritional Services/Dietician

- Help plan a healthy diet and advise meal preparation taking your symptoms into account
- A dietician may be available through your GP's Primary Care Network or through Home Care

Pharmacist

- **It is important to use one pharmacy** - If you take drugs for several problems you are less likely to encounter problems drugs being incompatible if all your prescriptions are on file in one pharmacy. The pharmacist can provide information about all medications – prescription and over the counter.