

## PD & Medication

If you have Parkinson disease (PD), you will eventually need to take medications. Medications provide relief from PD symptoms, like slowness and tremor. It may not be necessary to immediately start drugs to treat PD symptoms just because you have them. When symptoms start to interfere with your quality of life or the ability to function at a level that you want (in other words, they are causing “disability”), it is time to think about medication. For some people, this may be soon after the symptoms appear and for others it may be some time later. The decision to start taking drugs is one you make together with your doctor.

There are no medications that slow or stop the progression of PD. As PD progresses and your symptoms change, your medications will also need to change. This may be the *kind* of drugs you take, *how many* pills you take and the *timing* of each dose. It is important to keep your doctor and health care team aware of any changes in your PD symptoms. Adjustments in medications are aimed to help reduce your PD symptoms.

Your medications are tailored to treat you and your symptoms. Do not try someone else’s regime – it has been tailored for them! It is critical to take the medication(s) exactly as the doctor has prescribed them. If you are concerned about the medications you are taking, do not change them without talking with your doctor or health care team. Some drugs need to be stopped slowly to avoid serious complications. All medications have potential side effects. Your doctor should review the most common ones before you start a new medication. Contact the doctor who prescribed your drugs if you have side effects that concern you.

People are often very sensitive to the timing of medication. A delayed or missed dose may have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the medication. People may have difficulty getting good symptom control back after a delayed or missed dose of medication. It may take hours or days to get back into their normal response to the medication. Some people find a timer or an alarm on a cell phone a helpful reminder to take pills.

Remember that while medications are a very important part of treating PD symptoms, they should be part of an overall healthy lifestyle that includes good nutrition, exercise and social support/interactions. Medications are a tool to help you live well with PD.