



**Medication and exercise are two of the most important pieces when it comes to living well with Parkinson's. Managing your medications effectively and taking them as prescribed is one of the biggest assets in the management of Parkinson's symptoms. BUT...**

As many of you already know, managing Parkinson's medications can be challenging at times. Multiple medications, not-so-flexible timing, weird intervals, and different doses can leave a person feeling overwhelmed or frustrated at times. How often do I have to take the medication? What's the dose? Have there been changes in my medication regime? Did I take the right one? Have I remembered to take them on time?

It's a lot! So, let's look at some ways that can help streamline the management of your medications to help you take them as efficiently and effectively as possible.

**On Time, Every Time - Consistency is Key**

Consistency plays a large role in getting the most out of your Parkinson's medications. Medications taken as prescribed and on time each day optimizes your medication's effectiveness (and help you better notice when things aren't working as well). Missed or late dosages can lead to less optimal symptom management and give the impression that your

medication is not working properly. Late and/or missing doses can also throw your system off and that can take time to restabilize, it could take hours or even days. There are many strategies that can be employed to help you manage your medications as effectively as possible.

**Organization**

Creating a routine helps form consistent habits and helps que us to do specific tasks like take medication. Your routine will be unique to you and your medication needs. You may find it helpful to map your daily routine (including medication timing) out on paper to see a visual representation of your day. Managing multiple medications can be tricky and mixing them up can impact how your medications are working and managing your symptoms. Keeping an up-to-date medication list (including timing) can help keep your medication organized and ensure you are following your most current medication regime. Safely disposing prescription medications you are no longer taking can help reduce confusion.

Storing your medications in a way that keeps them organized and readily available is beneficial for

taking them both properly and on time. Let's look at some of these options. First up is the traditional storage containers commonly called pill/medication organizers. These are typically set up to be a day, a week, or a month's worth of medication. What works for you might depend on how often you take medication, how much medication you take, and/or your personal preferences. There are a variety of options when it comes to these medication organizers can be found in pharmacies, the pharmacy/healthcare department of box stores, online stores like amazon, and home health stores. Look for ones that have enough slots for how many times a day you take medication. If you cannot find one that fits your schedule you can get a little crafty and make your own.

If you are out and about you may want extra medication on hand with you just in case. There are a variety of options for small, portable cases to store small amounts of medication. These come in a variety of sizes and styles and are often small round or square boxes with one or two compartments. There are also wearable options in the form of pendants that can hold a few pills as well. Like the other pill containers these are often found in the place as the traditional medication organizers. Another great option are blister packs prepared by your pharmacy. Blister packs are a safe, reliable, and convenient way to make sure you're taking only the required amount of medication each day. Each set of medication is packed together, separate from all the others, and are easy to pop-out as you need them. These are made specifically for you and can help ensure you're getting the right medication at the right time.

## Reminders

If one is navigating Parkinson's solo and/or is having trouble remembering when or if they took their medication; reminders are a good tool to provide an assist. From checking off your daily to do list to setting cell phone alarms to remind you to more advanced technologies there are a variety of options to help you.

Alarms are a great way to remind you to take your medications on time by providing an auditory cue or physical cue like a vibration. A lot of our clients use clock/alarm settings on their smartphones (iPhones, Androids, etc.) to set their daily reminders. This technology can be programmed to repeat daily so you can set reminders and change them when your



schedule changes. This also goes for smart watches like Fit Bits and Apple watches. A more low-tech option could be to set a reminder on an alarm clock, your stove or microwave – though this option does limit you to your home. Finally pill dispensers are a great option combining a medication organizer and a reminder/alarm/dispensing system. These range from fully automated dispensers to smaller handheld dispensers with timers and alarms. This option can be beneficial for those who may be on their own or are struggling to manage medications.

## Storing Medications

Another part of managing medications is being aware of factors that can affect your medication physically. Things like humidity, heat and sunlight can cause your medication to crumble or become powdery which can reduce their effectiveness. This can happen when the weather outside is hot and/or humid (at home or on vacation), if you leave pills out or in an open container, or store them somewhere like a pocket, by the stove or in a bathroom. Storing your medication in a cool dry place can help prevent this from occurring. Keeping medications in their original container or in well sealed containers (blister packs, pill organizers) can help reduce the risk of environmental factors impacting your medication. Adding cotton balls to help absorb humidity in high humidity environments can also help.

Medications, and the timing of medication are vital to maintaining consistency and good quality of life with Parkinson's. It can be tricky to find a routine/system that works best for you. Trying out different options to find the best fit for you can help you better manage your medications so that you can get the most out of them and get the best symptom relief.