

Depression and Parkinson's

There are three main causes of depression in Parkinson's Disease

1. **Psychological:** feelings of isolation and frequent negative thoughts surrounding the diagnosis of a chronic illness are common and contribute to an overall feeling of depression
2. **Biological:** there are many brain pathways and chemicals that are affected by Parkinson's Disease. People with Parkinson's have a low level of a chemical called GABA which is commonly linked to high rates of anxiety and depression. Anxiety may also be higher during a person's "off time" due to fluctuations in the brain's chemistry.
3. **Situational:** ongoing situations of stress as well as medication side effects are environmental factors that can directly impact symptoms of depression

50% of people with Parkinson's Disease will experience some form of Depression

Common Symptoms of Depression

- Persistent sadness
- Loss of Interest In daily activities or previously enjoyed activities
- Decreased attention to personal hygiene and medical needs
- Feelings of guilt, self-criticism, and worthlessness
- Increased fatigue and lack of energy
- Feelings of helplessness or hopelessness
- Feelings of being a burden to loved ones
- Poor attention and difficulty concentrating
- Feeling slowed down or restless
- Frequent reflections on disability, death, and dying

Depression Diagnosis Complications with Parkinson's Disease

- Facial masking makes It difficult for people with Parkinson's to express emotions but Is not directly correlated to depression. It Is Important, but difficult, to separate these two symptoms.
- People with Parkinson's often don't recognize their own mood changes or are unable to fully explain the symptoms to a health care provider