

Off-Times in Parkinson's Disease

What Is an Off-Time?

When levels of Parkinson's Medications (Levodopa) are so low in the brain that the symptoms of Parkinson's, both motor and non-motor, become more severe and pronounced. Off-times usually happen right away in the morning, in-between medication doses, or if you miss a dose of medication or take it late.

What Can an Off-Time Look Like?

- a gradual increase in tremors
- increased stiffness or cramping
- increased unpredictable episodes of difficulty moving
- increased anxiety

Create a Log to Track Your Off-Time Symptoms

- It may be helpful to log your symptoms during off-times for a few days to show your doctor exactly what you are experiencing and how often you are having it. This can help guide the doctor's decision for next steps to treat your off-times.

What Can You Do to Limit Off-Times

- Take your medications on-time
- Do not take Levodopa with high-protein meals. Both the medication and protein are absorbed by the same part of the digestive system and if taken together, the body may absorb more protein and less of the medication

What Can Doctors Do to Manage Off-Times

The ultimate goal with managing off-times is to keep you as functional and independent as possible so you can continue to participate in the activities that are important to you. Your doctors have the following options in treating your off-time symptoms:

- Adjust your dose of levodopa
- Add a different medication to your current regimen to assist in keeping the levels of dopamine in your brain consistent
- Try a controlled or extended-release formulation of carbidopa-levodopa that is designed to extend the benefits of the medication
- Discuss surgical options like Deep Brain Stimulation or a Duopa therapy pump