

Pain and Parkinson's Disease

Chronic pain is *twice as common* among people with Parkinson's than it is among the general population. There are five different types of pain that are commonly associated with Parkinson's Disease:

1. **Musculoskeletal:** musculoskeletal pain comes from the diseases affect on bones, muscles, ligaments, and tendons. This type of pain can occur suddenly or be long-lasting. It can also occur in one or multiple areas of the body. Up to 75% of patients experience this type of pain.
2. **Neuropathic:** neuropathic pain (sometimes called radicular pain) is caused by damage in nerves. This type of pain is often described as shooting or burning. Up to 30% of patients experience this type of pain.
3. **Dystonic:** this type of pain is caused from sustained or repetitive muscle twisting, spasms, or cramps. Up to 50% of patients experience this type of pain.
4. **Akathisia:** this type of pain is often described as the feeling of restlessness or the inability to keep still. This is often more of an “uncomfortable” feeling than pain, but is still categorized as a type of pain.
5. **Central Pain:** central pain is often described as a vague, constant, and/or dull overall ache or pain. This type of pain is caused by miscommunications between the pathways in the brain that control pain and sensation.

Tips for Treating and Managing Pain

- **Medications** - Always tell your care team about pain that you or your loved one are experiencing. Your care team may be able to adjust medications to help keep you comfortable and to optimize their benefits. They can also prescribe medications that may help to alleviate the pain.
- **Exercise and Physical Therapy** - exercise is a beneficial tool to keep in your toolbox but it can be a double edged sword. Too much exercise when you are in pain may only make the pain worse. But exercising before pain begins can help keep pain away. Working closely with a physical therapist can be helpful because they can help recommend specific exercises you can be doing to target the source of your pain.
- **Treat Depression** - pain and depression are closely linked. If you struggle with chronic pain you may experience an increase in your depression symptoms. Likewise, if you struggle with depression symptoms, you may notice an increase in chronic pain. Treating any depression symptoms may help in decreasing your level of chronic pain.
- **Respect the Pain** - pushing through the pain during challenging activities is never the answer as this will only lead to an increase in pain later on. Try to only complete activities that do not cause or increase your pain.