

Parkinson's Disease Psychosis

By late stages of Parkinson's Disease, up to 70% of people living with PD will experience symptoms of psychosis. However, people with Parkinson's can experience symptoms of psychosis at any stage of the disease and the severity of symptoms can vary. Parkinson's psychosis symptoms include hallucinations, Illusions, and delusions. PD psychosis also commonly occurs with depression and anxiety.

Hallucinations: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, or feeling things that aren't real

Illusions: misinterpreting real things in the environment as other objects

Delusions: believing things that aren't true

What Causes Parkinson's Psychosis?

- Changes in levels of dopamine and serotonin from the progression of Parkinson's Disease
- Changes in levels of chemicals In the brain from Parkinson's medications - medication side effects
- PD Psychosis Is common when the person has dementia or the presence of Lewy Bodies

Treatment of Psychosis Symptoms

- Bring up any and all psychosis symptoms with your doctor and care team as soon as possible. They will want to perform a clinic evaluation and may refer to a psychologist for more specialized care. However, your Parkinson's doctor may start by increasing your dose of Parkinson's medications.

What to Expect as a Care Partner

- When your loved one is experiencing a hallucination, illusion, or delusion, try to stay as calm and patient as you can.
- Arguing with the person about what they are experiencing is not the answer. Arguing will make them believe what they are seeing or experiencing is real even more.
- If your loved one still has some insight, calmly explaining to them that what they are experiencing isn't real may be helpful. If they start to argue with you or don't believe what you are saying, meet them where they are at. Offer solutions for them. For example, if they are seeing a stray animal in the home, offer to take the animal out of the house for them.
- Secure dangerous objects and keep hallways and open floor areas clear of clutter. This will help to prevent falls and injuries during a time when your loved one may be experiencing a psychosis episode.
- Above all else, understand that what your loved one is experiencing is absolutely real to them. Validate their feelings and be there to support them when the time and situation is right.