



Parkinson's Perspective

Newsletter of the Colorado Parkinson Foundation, Inc. and
the Colorado Springs Parkinson's Support Group
www.co-parkinson.org | (719) 884-0103

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The Colorado Springs Parkinson's
Support Group (part of CPF) meets
10AM, the first Saturday of each month
at the Central United Methodist Church,
4373 Galley Rd, Colo Spgs, 80915
(with exceptions to be noted in this newsletter)

June Meeting: Saturday, June 7th – 10:00 am – 1:30 pm

We will be Zooming but NOT recording this meeting

Location: Central United Methodist Church,
4373 Galley Rd-just east of Murray Blvd.

9:30am – Come early for a group sing-along
with music therapist, Heather Johnson.

*See more about Heather's business under 'Other Opportunities'
later in this newsletter.*

9:45am – Everyone else come a few minutes early to
check in, greet other members and ask questions.

First time visitors: Be sure to sign in, get a name tag and proceed
to the visitors' table for some special attention and information.

*Knowledge is power and enables us all to live well, so plan to attend
the meetings at Central United Methodist Church.*

June Program:

Subject: How to Prevent/Reverse Parkinson's through Nutrition

Speaker: Dr. Bruce Fife, C.N., N.D.



About the Speaker: Dr. Bruce Fife, is an author, speaker, certified nutritionist, and naturopathic physician. He has written over 20 books including The Coconut Oil Miracle, The New Arthritis Cure and Stop Alzheimer's Now!: How to Prevent and Reverse Dementia, Parkinson's, ALS, Multiple Sclerosis, and other Neurodegenerative Disorder. He is the publisher and editor of the Healthy Ways Newsletter and server as the president of the Coconut Research Center, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to educate the public and medical community about the health and nutritional aspects of coconut and related food. Dr. Fife is considered one of the world's leading experts on dietary fats and oils. He is a popular speaker and travels throughout the world lecturing at health fairs, conferences, hospitals, and spas. He has appeared on hundreds of radio and television programs worldwide.

A Potluck will follow the monthly program

June Potluck: Hot Dogs, Sandwiches, Chips, etc.

If you would like to sign up to be one of the providers of a main dish or to bring a side dish/dessert, you can contact Bill Hicks at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or potluck@co-parkinson.org, no later than Wednesday June 4th and tell him what you would like to bring.

Remember that bringing food for the potluck is voluntary.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!

The President's Corner

Jill Reid-Acting President, CPF & CSPSG



Keep an eye out in this newsletter for the article on other ways to replace missing dopamine besides carb/levo, titled 'Parkinson's Disease is Linked to Lack of Dopamine — Here's How to Boost it, and read it. Not only does it address a novel approach to replacing the effects of dopamine using virtual reality technology, it also talks about a good dietary approach for people with Parkinson's. It's a very interesting and educational read!

The annual Caregiver Pampering Day is on Saturday, June 7, at the Pikes Peak Hospice & Palliative Care at 2550 Tenderfoot Hill St. I highly recommend you caregivers take advantage of this wonderful day. Our caregivers who have gone in the past years can't say enough good about it. Go to <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=oYks1pY79kmsxL-T4NiluUpUv1PZQtMqxz3RVk57XNUM0VYMDVHR05HOUIBVzhEOVg4RzdLWVhVHTy4u> to register.

It occurred to me after last month's breakout sessions that we need to capture the good information that comes out of our discussions. The Executive Committee's secretary has volunteered to take notes in future caregivers' breakout session, and we'll find someone to take notes on the Parkinson's side. We'll publish them in the following month's newsletter. Thanks to Kathleen Foster and Ann Grant Martin, I have some of the key points discussed during May's Parkinson's session:

— In order to get a handicap placard for your car, go to the Colorado DMV website and print out the application. Fill out your portion and take the application to your neurologist's office (it might be quicker to get into to see your GP, and he would probably be willing to sign it). After a doctor fills out his portion and signs it, take it to a DMV office that issues handicap placards. You don't need an appointment. You have to renew the placards periodically, which you may be able to do online.

— If you are going to travel by air and would like to have wheelchair assistance at the airport, request the assistance when purchasing your airline ticket. Wheelchair assist may run smoothly or you may encounter delays. Request it anyway since it usually saves time and certainly gets you to the right gate with next to zero stress on you. Your companion can walk along beside you to get through TSA more quickly and board the plane first. Tip your attendant as a courtesy.

— Incontinence can be treated with medication (yeah, I know, another pill!) like Oxybutynin or Myrbetriq. Incontinence underwear is available in all shapes, sizes, and absorbency. Incontinence is inconvenient and embarrassing, but drink a lot of water anyway as it fends off other health problems!

— Driving can seem daunting to people with Parkinson's but there is a great safe-driving program available here in Colorado Springs. Located on Centennial Ave, it's called Fitness to Drive. Physical therapists teach the 3 ½ hour course that includes classroom and behind-the-wheel evaluations. It costs around \$470. Even if you've decided not to drive anymore, it's a good idea to take the course anyway, in case you find yourself having to drive during an emergency.

Although I don't have notes from the caregiver's breakout session, I want to mention that we got a lot of great inputs from Ike Schneider, a gentleman who was a caregiver for his mom (she had Alzheimer's) and who brings one of our members to NeuroPong. He has a heart for caregivers, especially those whose patients have any dementia at all. I asked Ike if he would be willing to attend our Caregivers' Support Group meetings on the third Thursday of each month, and he said "yes, gladly!" Good to his word, he came to the meeting in May and was of great help to the three women who attended. He'll continue to attend until he moves to the east coast next year.

This month's comedy is The Game Plan, starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. Joe Kingman, one of sports' toughest players ever, takes on his biggest challenge yet—fatherhood! A superstar with an ego bigger than a football field, Joe is getting ready for a run at the big championship game when the 8-year-old daughter he never knew existed shows up at his not-so-family-friendly bachelor pad. As the big game gets closer, he begins to realize the most meaningful win he can achieve is the heart of the one little fan who counts the most. By the way, the girl playing the daughter is as cute as a button and pretty much steals the show. Enjoy!

Ask the Doctor!



Dr. Grabert has generously agreed to answer your questions pertaining to Parkinson's Disease each month in our newsletter column called: "Ask the Doctor!"

If you have questions you'd like to submit to Dr. Grabert, email them to Julie, our newsletter coordinator at the following email address: info@co-parkinson.org.

HELP SPREAD SOME SUNSHINE TO OUR MEMBERS!



If you know of a Parkinsonian or PD caregiver that is having a tough time (illness, surgery, etc.) or one of our members has passed away, please let our Sunshine Chairman, MJ Thompson know.

She can be reached by calling (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

SAD NEWS!

Jeremiah Sven Jonasson, known affectionately as Sven, passed away on December 10, 2024. Sven wore many hats throughout his life, each one showcasing a unique facet of his multi-talented persona. He was a linguist who spoke five languages fluently. His talent was not confined to vocal expression, as he was also a concert pianist, captivating audiences with his mesmerizing melodies. Beyond his personal achievements, Sven also served in the military for 22 years, dedicating a significant part of his life to serving his country in numerous parts of the world. His patriotism, dedication, and courage were qualities that he carried with him long beyond his military service. Jeremiah's legacy is one of generosity. He made an impact on every life he touched with his selfless actions, his unyielding kindness, and his persistent desire to make a positive difference. This legacy will continue to inspire and guide those he left behind. His departure leaves a void that will never be filled.

Sven will be profoundly missed by his family members and the many friends he made throughout his lifetime. However, his memory will continue to live on in the hearts of those who were fortunate enough to know him. As we mourn his passing, let us also remember and celebrate his remarkable life and the lessons he taught us all. A "Celebration of Life" will be scheduled at a different date and time.

*Thank you
for for helping!*

A big **THANK YOU** to everyone who brought food to share and to those that helped with setup & cleanup at the last meeting!

July/August Newsletter Input Deadline: June 13th

Call or e-mail Julie with your input for the newsletter at:

(XXX) XXX-XXXX

info@co-parkinson.org

June CSPSG Executive Committee Meeting

June 10th @ 09:30am

(Location: Place to be determined)

Contact Jill Reid at: president@co-parkinson.org, if you haven't been to an Executive Meeting so we will know that you're coming and to get you the address. Leave your email address so Jill can contact you if anything changes.



• Bob Adams
• Donald Ader
• Penny Austin
• Deloit (Dee) Beatty
• Linda Bresee

Your birthday isn't listed?
Fill out the membership form
and check BD listed YES!

• Mary Margaret Brummeler
• Darrell Colwell
• Gary Garland
• Carla Holland
• Lynette Holland
• Mike Koloski
• Charles Kovac
• Donna Kring
• Mark Lekarczyk
• Rusty Merrill

• Suzanne Metzler
• Marty Miller
• Art Moore
• Dave Moross
• Ronald Morris
• Bill Noe
• Jon Nordby
• Melissa Nowlin
• Ronald Null
• Nancy Phillips
• Patricia Plank

• Julie Rush
• Larry Rush
• Jean Saunders
• Mary Sauvain
• Beverly Schulz
• George Scott
• Daniel Skousen
• Laruen Sloan
• Cindy Stempson
• John Sullivan
• Celine Terrell

Potluck Favorites — Shakin' & Bakin' Cookbook

Cookbooks Are Here!

The price is a donation or free if you can't afford to donate. You can order them from Vicki Patterson at project@co-parkinson.org.

The cookbooks are bound so that new recipes can be added in the future. So continue to send in your favorite recipes – old or new family recipes, newly discovered favorite recipes, etc. We only want recipes that you have actually tried and liked – not ones that you think should be good but haven't tried or tasted. All favorite recipes are welcome.

Send them to project@co-parkinson.org.



Recipe of the Month: Eggplant Gratin

Our low carb/good fat ketogenic study showed incredible results. Not only was there remarkable improvement in the symptoms of Parkinson's but also with overall health in general (including the health of caregivers who chose to change their diet along with their Parkinsonian). Since it seems clear that everyone's health would improve exponentially if we all changed our diet to eat this way and since we have potlucks, we thought we would feature an easy low carb/good fat recipe or two in the newsletter each month to promote healthy eating.

If you have a favorite low carb/good fat recipe you'd like to share, please send it to Julie at: info@co-parkinson.org.

Ingredients:

Olive Oil	¼ C heavy cream
¾ lb eggplant, unpeeled sliced ½"	½ C & 2 T Parmesan Cheese
¼ C ricotta cheese	Kosher salt & pepper
1 extra large egg	½ C sugar-free marinara sauce

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 400°.
- Heat about 1/8" of olive oil in a large frying pan over medium heat.
- When oil is almost smoking, add several slices of eggplant & cook, turning once, until they are evenly browned on both sides & cooked through, about 5 minutes – Be careful, it splatters.
- Transfer cooked eggplant slices to paper towels to drain.
- Add more oil, heat and add more eggplant until all slices are cooked.
- Meanwhile in small bowl, mix together the ricotta, egg, heavy cream, ¼ C parmesan, 1/8 tsp and 1/8 tsp pepper.
- In each of 2 gratin dishes, place a layer of eggplant slices, then sprinkle with parmesan, salt & pepper and spoon ½ of the marinara sauce.
- Next, add second layer eggplant, more salt & pepper, half the ricotta mixture and finally, 2 Tbl of grated parmesan on top.
- Place dishes on a baking sheet & bake for 25-30 minutes or until the custard sets & top is browned. Serve warm.

Parkinson's Disease Related Providers:

If you are seeing a provider not listed here that has given you excellent care with any Parkinson's issue, let Julie know at info@co-parkinson.org so that they can be added to this list.

The following providers have been recommended by multiple members:

Colorado Springs

Dr. Bradley Priebe, MD – Neurologist at Peak Neurology, PC; (719) 445-9902

Steven Swank, PharmD, BCACP – Peak Neurology, Clinical Pharmacist Specialist; (719) 445-9902

Dr. Aparna Komatineni, MD – Neurologist at Centura Penrose Hospital and UCHealth; (719) 694-3595

Dr. Andrea Manhart, DO – Neurologist at UCHealth; (719) 365-7300

Dr. Lael Stander, MD – Neurologist at UCHealth; (719) 365-7300 Note: Does well w/ PD vision issues

Elizabeth Harmon, PA – UCHealth; (719) 365-7300

Melinda McClenden, NP – UCHealth; (719) 365-7300

Dr. Kevin Scott, MD – Neurologist at UCHealth; (719) 365-7300

Dr. Monica Stanton, MD – Primary Care Physician at UCHealth in Monument; (719) 364-9930

Dr. David Stevens – Neurologist at CS Neurological Associates; (719) 473-3272

Bettner Vision – Neuro-Ophthalmology Vision Therapy; (719) 282-0400

Denver

Dr. Michael Korsmo, MD – Neurologist at UCHealth, Anschutz Medical Campus; (720) 848-2080

Dr. David VanSickle, MD – Neurosurgeon at Neurosurgery One; (720) 638-7500
Note: DBS expert

Erin Van Dok, OD – Neurological Optometrist at UCHealth Sue Anschutz-Rodgers Eye Center; (720) 848-2020

Dr. Victoria Pelak, MD – Neuro-ophthalmology, UCHealth Sue Anschutz-Rodgers Eye Center; (720) 848-2020

Dr. Trevor Hawkins Neurologist at UCHealth Neurosciences Center, Anschutz Medical Campus; (720) 848-2080

Other Local Support Groups:

Parkinson's Caregivers Support Group

All family caregivers of persons with Parkinson's are invited to come and participate in our discussion meetings. They are the monthly on the 3rd Thursday, from 10:00-12:00 at Central United Methodist Church, 4373 Galley Rd, Colo Spgs, 80915.

We're looking for a replacement for Brenda Hicks to head up the Parkinson's Caregivers Support Group.

If you are interested in helping out, call Brenda to find out what the position entails.

You can contact her at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Ladies w/ Parkinson's Support Group

If you are a fun-idea person, please consider volunteering to lead this valuable group.

If you're interested please notify Julie Pfarrer at info@co-parkinson.org or (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Essential Tremor Support Group

Meeting Location: ENT Conf Rm, Pikes Peak Library District; Colo Spgs Library 21c, 1175 Chapel Hills Drive. Contact Jim Sanchez for meeting dates/times at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Support Group

Meets the 3rd Saturday of the month at 10am at the Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 3rd Street, Monument. Contact Syble Krafft or Barry Hanenburg.

Other Opportunities:

Trazer — Brought to you by the YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region:

Designed for injury recovery, injury prevention, and enhancing performance, Trazer aligns perfectly at the point where biology, technology, and data intersect to track, measure, and improve physical and cognitive function regardless of age or capability.

A multi-purpose technology with wide-ranging applications spanning healthcare, senior care, sports, wellness, orthotics and prosthetics, Trazer helps every body move better.

For more information or to schedule, stop by the YMCA front desk.

Adult Speech Therapy:

Outpatient speech therapy services.

Personalized speech therapy for restoration of function due to illness or injury.

Treating:

Parkinson's - Voice & Swallowing
- SPEAK OUT!
- LSVT

Contact Jana Hothan, MA, CCC-SLP at slp@janahothan.com or call (719) 338-8165 or for more info.

Parkinson's Sing-a-Long Group:

Square Music Co offers individual music therapy services with Heather Johnson, MT-BC! Individual sessions can be held in person in the Colorado Springs area or via telehealth.

Heather has over 5 years of experience working with neuro populations and hosts a Parkinson's singing group before each support group meeting at 9:30 am as well! Music therapy with Parkinson's works towards vocal strength, control, and longevity, increasing fine and gross motor skills, gait training, and other types of therapeutic goals through individualized music experiences.

To learn more or schedule a free consultation, call Heather at (719) 345-2887 or email heatherjohnson@squaremusic.co.

PD Exercise Classes:

Falcon Exercise Group

Mon & Fri: 11:00 – noon, Grace Community Church. For more info contact Catherine Reed at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

UCCS Center for Active Living at the Lane Center

Power Moves group exercise and Balance & Agility classes. For more information call (719) 255-8004 or email CAL@uccs.edu.

NIA Class

Moving to Heal – the art of feeling better; slower movements with joy and purpose. NIA works with balance, breath, cognitive mind/body function, mobility and stability. You can go at your own pace. Stop if you want, sit down and dance while sitting in a chair for a while. All while dancing to music from all genres; Jane, the instructor, often asks what we need that day and works her routine around what can help. She has done a wonderful job making the routines fit our Parkinson's needs.

Cost: \$10 a class

When: Every Friday at 10:30 am

Where: 525 E Fountain Blvd.

MACS–corner of Fountain & Royer

One-on-One Physical Therapy

For people with Parkinson's Disease and all movement disorders. Provided by Danielle (Spivey) Mulligan, PT, MSPT who is a Physical Therapist, Certified Vestibular Therapist, LSVT and PWR for Parkinson's.

Where: 5818 N. Nevada Avenue, Suite 325
Phone Number: (719) 365-6871.

Neuroping for Parkinson's

Table tennis for Parkinsonians who want to improve both motor and non-motor symptoms and avoid mental decline.

When: Tuesdays & Thursdays

Time: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Location: Downtown YMCA
207 North Nevada Avenue
In the Small Gym

To sign up call the front desk at (719) 473-9622

For more information contact Travis Lerma at (719) 495-5130 or lerma@ppymca.org.
Neurologicrehab.com

Rock Steady Boxing – Boxing with Love

New Rock Steady Boxing for folks with Parkinson's Disease at the Boxing with Love Gym Tues @ noon (please come 15 min early if your first time) 1710 Briargate Blvd. Ste 100 (Next to Dicks Sporting Goods).

For more info contact Karen Bishop PT, DPT at love@rsbaffiliate.com.

Max Capacity NeuroFitness

Free Boxing, PWR Bootcamp and Cardio Circuit for people with Parkinson's. Cognitive Cardio class available for \$10/class!

Physical therapist Emily Moncheski at Max Capacity, PLLC, offers individual Parkinson's physical therapy, most insurance accepted Conveniently downtown

525 E. Fountain Blvd. Suite 150

Contact Emily at emily@maxcapacitypt.com or call: (719) 213-3996, fax: (719) 284-4624.

Dance for Parkinson's

Moving with joy, creativity, and community to support people living with Parkinson's.

All are welcome and care partners are encouraged to move with us! Classes meet in person every Tuesday at 11:30 am and every Friday at 11:00 am at Ormao Dance Company, 10 S. Spruce Street.

\$5/class | Free for care partners

You can also join us for this class online.

Visit our website www.ormaodance.org and click on "Dance for Parkinson's" under the "Outreach" tab to get the Zoom link.

Contact Laura at laura.hymers@gmail.com or (719) 640-8478

YMCA PD Exercise Classes

We utilize exercise as medicine to increase quality of life so that you can get better and stay better.

Tri-Lakes YMCA: PWR!Moves;
Tues & Thurs, 1:00-2:00 PM

Briargate YMCA: PWR!Moves;
Mon, Wed, Fri, 1:30-2:30 PM

YMCA at 1st & Main; PWR!Moves;
Mon & Wed, 1:15-2:15 PM

For more info contact Travis Lerma at lerma@ppymca.org.

Colorado Springs Rocksteady Boxing

"Let's kick some PD BUTT!" Tues, Wed, & Thurs: 10am–11:15am & 11:45am–1:00pm
Location: Otis Park. 731 Iowa Ave. For more info, call Bill O'Donnell at (719) 243-9422.

Neuro Logic Rehabilitation and Wellness

One-on-one physical therapy and wellness services for people with Parkinson's Disease and other movement/neuro disorders in the comfort of their home with outpatient mobile services. We come to you, to meet you where you are in your treatment & diagnosis!

Board Certified Clinical Specialist in Neurologic Physical Therapy Certified PWR! (Parkinson's Wellness Recovery) Moves Therapist

For more information, contact Ryan Mueller, PT, DPT, NCS at (719) 306-0009 or ryan@neurologicrehab.com

or visit neurologicrehab.com / Fax: (719) 691-7994

LENDING LOCKER INVENTORY

If you would like to borrow any equipment listed here, please contact: Mary Sauvain at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

AccVoice TV speaker w/ hearing aid technology
Air mattress
Back brace
Bed canes
Bedding lifters
Bed pan
Bed rails
Bed risers
Bedside toilets
Blood pressure cuff
Canes
Cervical traction machine
Chair-side food tray
Chair/sofa canes
Crutches
Exercise bikes
Exercise floor pedals
Homedic massagers
Hospital beds
Hospital bed food trays
Hoyer Lift
Lazercue for freezing help
Lift chairs
Lift-ware tremor compensating utensils
Monthly med carousel with reminder alerts
Pick-up assists
Punching bag - freestanding
Shower seats/benches
Sock helper
Squatty potty
Standup assist transport lift
Standup Walker
Suction cup hand rail
Swivel seat
Toilet arm assist
Toilet rails
Toilet seats
Transfer poles
Transport chairs
Tub rails
U-step
Walkers with wheels & seats
Waterproof mattress protector (Twin)
Wheelchairs

ITEMS THAT ARE FREE FOR THE TAKING:

Contact Julie Pfarrer if interested in these items at info@co-parkinson.org.

Ankle brace (elastic pull on)	1
Bibs (Adult)	8
Blood Pressure Monitor	1
Easy sip hydrate bottle	1
Gate belt	7
Hospital gown	1
Hospital slippers-XL&XXL	2
Male portable urinals, new in individual pkgs – 32 oz capacity	2
Pill crusher, storage, & drink cup combination	1
Rehab squeeze balls	2
Reusable bed pads	8
Wash cloth (disposable, no-rinse, self-sudsing)	1
Weighted utensils	6
Transfer pads – can handle a person up to 300 lbs	4
Zippered ted socks – black	1 pr
Cardinal health guards for men - extra heavy absorbency -14ct	2 pkgs
Depend men's guards-52ct – 1 unopened and 3 opened with a few missing	8 pkgs
Generic briefs, L/XL – 18ct	4 pkgs
Prevail daily male guards – one size fits all – maximum absorbency-14ct	2 pkgs
Prevail Nu-fit daily briefs w/ fastener tabs – 32"-44" size – maximum absorbency-16ct	2 pkgs
Women's Always Discreet s/ m/ p/m maximum protection underwear – 42ct	2 pkgs
Women's Always Anti-Bunch extra long panty liners. Extra protection – 92ct	1 pkg

Parkinson's Disease is Linked to Lack of Dopamine — Here's How to Boost It

By Zena le Roux, April 16, 2025

Lifestyle changes can improve the course of Parkinson's disease, according to research.

Zena le Roux is a health journalist with a master's in investigative health journalism and a certified health and wellness coach specializing in functional nutrition. She is trained in sports nutrition, mindful eating, internal family systems, and applied polyvagal theory. She works in private practice and serves as a nutrition educator for a UK-based health school.

"My active life is over. My risk of dying from COVID is high. I'll probably end up in a wheelchair or shuffling around like a zombie," were all thoughts that raced through Keith Wilson's mind when he was first diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

Wilson learned in an online seminar run by a Parkinson's UK research group that a lack of dopamine caused his condition. He soon discovered that an adrenaline rush made him feel better. Adrenaline and dopamine are chemically similar, his health consultant told him. Adrenaline can also temporarily boost dopamine levels.

At the end of the COVID-19 lockdown, Wilson planned a trip with his wife and two 14-year-old godsons. That week alone, he rode roller coasters 37 times with the boys and felt his condition had been momentarily reversed.

"I was more chatty, energized, and sociable," he told The Epoch Times.

Wilson's wife pointed out that some of his rides had been virtual and suggested they find a way to recreate the experiences at home. After learning that virtual roller coasters were available through virtual reality (VR) headsets, they purchased two—and the results were striking.

"The use of VR has restored my sense of balance and given me so much more energy. It stimulates underused parts of the brain, which helps compensate for the loss of dopamine," Wilson said.

His experience aligns with research on how dopamine-driven activities can help manage Parkinson's symptoms, a concept that has caught the attention of experts.

Parkinson's is often seen as a condition beyond personal control, but Wilson's journey challenges that notion.

"I think his approach is excellent," Dr. Sulagna Misra, an integrative medicine practitioner, told The Epoch Times. She said integrating nontraditional methods, like virtual reality with standard treatments, can lead to better outcomes than medication alone.

The Dopamine Connection

Wilson's experience may point to how a

lack of dopamine is a key part of Parkinson's disease and that engaging in dopamine-stimulating activities may help relieve some symptoms.

"Parkinson's leads to the death of neurons—specifically those that produce dopamine—one of the key drivers of its symptoms is a lack of dopamine," Kate Chaytor-Norris, a registered nutritional therapist, told The Epoch Times. "One of the key drivers of its symptoms is a lack of dopamine."

Dopamine has many roles, but in Parkinson's, its most recognized impact is on motor function. Nerve signal transmission is how the brain sends messages to the body to control movement and other functions. In Parkinson's disease, low dopamine levels disrupt these messages, making it harder for the body to move properly.

Movement slows, gait and balance become difficult, and tremors often develop. However, dopamine also influences motivation, pleasure, and attention. This means that alongside motor challenges, Parkinson's can have significant but less widely recognized effects on mental health, Chaytor-Norris said.

However, dopamine dysfunction doesn't just cause the disease, it also makes it worse over time. Improving dopamine levels and protecting the cells that produce dopamine may be crucial for slowing its progression, which can be effective in managing Parkinson's symptoms.

A Multi-Pronged Approach

Wilson's success in managing Parkinson's disease didn't come from any single approach but rather from a combination of exercise and innovative tools like virtual reality.

Exercise—The Dopamine-Driven Activity

Exercise is widely recognized as a nonpharmacological approach to managing Parkinson's disease.

A 2024 study published in npj Parkinson's Disease found that six months of intense exercise helped improve dopamine levels in the brains of people with early Parkinson's disease, showing that exercise can positively affect the brain's dopamine system.

Intense exercise, like the roller coaster that alleviated Wilson's symptoms, can boost adrenaline. Adrenaline is a hormone that is chemically similar to dopamine. It can temporarily boost dopamine levels, which can be why an adrenaline rush can help restore a sense of alertness or normality.

Wilson made exercise a cornerstone of his Parkinson's management plan. In 2024, his real-world adventures included cycling around the Zuiderzee in Holland, tackling the Haute Route in the

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Parkinson's Disease May Soon Outpace Dementia: What to Know

By Lisa O'Mary, WebMD, April 11, 2025

Two incurable diseases loom over our aging populace: Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. Right now, Alzheimer's is more common and seems a more widespread concern than the relatively narrow shadow cast by Parkinson's.

That may change, as revealed by a surprising new study.

Understanding Parkinson's Disease – Symptoms

Learn about the symptoms of Parkinson's disease from the experts at WebMD.

North American cases of Parkinson's disease are projected to increase 30% by 2050, and will double globally, according to the study, published last month in the journal *The BMJ*.

That's about 25 million people worldwide by 2050 – the kind of prediction that gets attention in the realms of public health, insurance, hospitals, and politics.

But what should it mean to you?

A lot, said Parkinson's expert Alfonso Fasano, MD. Alzheimer's is the most common nerve-degrading disease, he said, citing recent dementia figures. If dementia rates continue to decline as they have been, Parkinson's will take over first place in the coming decades, he said.

"People need to know about it because there is something that can be done to prevent, if possible, the occurrence of the disease, but also to live better with the disease if you get it," he said.

The field of Parkinson's research is afire with recent breakthroughs in diagnostics and treatments. Symptoms mostly affect movement – slowing down, stiffness, and tremor while at rest. Others range from mental health effects to pain and fatigue.

If you think Parkinson's means being wheelchair-bound with a short life expectancy, it's time for an update.

"People shouldn't be scared. This is not terrible news," said Xuemei Huang, MD, PhD, department chair and a professor of neurology for the University of Virginia Health System and School of Medicine.

She published a study in January showing that most people with Parkinson's who receive specialized care continue to independently carry out their daily activities for 10 to 15 years after diagnosis.

"Once upon a time, in the 1950s, before we even knew about the role of dopamine in the brain and before we knew much about Parkinson's disease, the average life expectancy of Parkinson's patients was seven to eight years," Huang said. "Many would be wheelchair-bound by the fifth year."

Like soon-to-be second place dementia, though, there is no cure for Parkinson's disease. Scientists are working to decipher the combination of factors that trigger its start. A small portion of cases are clearly driven by genetics, but lifestyle and environmental factors figure prominently.

Early Signs of Parkinson's – and New Ways to Manage It

Researchers can spot clues of impending Parkinson's disease. Early detection can be crucial for a longer, richer life.:00

Signs and Symptoms of Parkinson's Disease

WebMD explains the classic symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

"Some people might have signs that tell us that their brain is cooking Parkinson's disease, even if they don't have Parkinson's disease," said Fasano, a professor of neurology at the University of Toronto and a staff neurologist at Humanitas University in Milan, Italy.

Some of these long-familiar signs are better understood now, like a reduced sense of smell and a condition called REM sleep behavior disorder. With this condition, people act out their dreams without waking, by talking, moving, or making gestures. (Usually, a brain mechanism keeps us immobile during sleep.)

"Once, I saw a video of a person who was pretending to smoke a cigarette and talking to someone," said Fasano. "Some people are dreaming of being attacked or chased by bad people, and they start fighting. And

there are also some situations where the bed partner has been hit by the person who was dreaming."

This can be a symptom as many as 15 years before a Parkinson's diagnosis.

There's a new, same-day blood test that Fasano calls "a miracle." The test, called RT-QulC, looks for a protein called synuclein that is evident in the brains of people with Parkinson's 95% of the time. It's a protein that can disrupt normal cell and organ function.

"Some people have this positivity for this test years and years before they have the onset of the disease," Fasano said. "The catch, though, is that some people don't have the accumulation of synuclein" and still develop Parkinson's.

On a parallel track are developments in late-stage Parkinson's care. New medications are ready for review by the FDA, including tavapadon, which in phase III trials significantly improved movement symptoms and daily living.

And just last month, hospitals began offering an updated technology for a longtime treatment called deep brain stimulation.

For those in the early stages, Huang noted, a longer life could still eventually result in limited mobility and a loss of intelligence due to dementia.

A recent analysis by her team found that about 20% of the 1 million people in the U.S. who have Parkinson's disease also require a caregiver and the use of a wheelchair, along with having a dementia diagnosis.

Huang is optimistic that more breakthroughs are on the horizon.

Advances in Deep Brain Stimulation

This year, a longtime technology for late-stage Parkinson's got a major upgrade. Surgically placed electrodes in the brain deliver electrical pulses to lessen symptoms. Called deep brain stimulation, or DBS, it's been likened to a pacemaker for the brain and has been around since 1997. But it required in-office programming that could not be fine-tuned without return visits. [ut Transcript](#)

The Stages of Parkinson's Disease

WebMD provides an overview of the five stages of Parkinson's disease.

A newly FDA-approved upgrade called adaptive DBS was rolled out to dozens of patients in Colorado starting at the end of March. Using aDBS, the power and duration of electrical pulses adjust to signals sensed in the brain in real time. The improved treatment reduces side effects, particularly uncontrolled muscle movements called dyskinesia, which can cause, for example, writhing so severe that one may fall out of a chair.

One patient, Kate Goes In Center, 75, of Denver, said it has helped. Parkinson's disease, she said, "affects my chin and my throat, everything. It's hard for me to swallow, and it's hard for me to talk." She volunteered to be the first aDBS patient at UHealth University of Colorado Hospital. Video of the new technology showed instant effects.

"How do you feel?" one of her doctors, Drew Kern, MD, MS, asked her after she took a short walk around the treatment room and sat back down. Kern is an associate professor at the CU Anschutz School of Medicine's departments of Neurosurgery and Neurology.

The results clearly came right away. Her tremor was pretty much gone.

She raised her eyebrows as she said to him, "A lot better."

"I had kind of given up for a while," Goes In Center, a former runner, said later. "I felt like I wanted to go because my life was so difficult every day, and this gives me a lot of hope. And exercise is key to keeping you active. I couldn't even get myself to exercise because I was afraid of falling – I did fall once and broke my wrist last summer – but this makes a difference. I feel like I could [exercise] again."

Exercise is among the areas of future study with aDBS, because already, physical activity has been shown to potentially slow the progression of Parkinson's disease. The new aDBS technology includes something called an electrode identifier that Kern and his colleague John Thompson, PhD, also a CU associate professor, helped develop. It helps collect real-time data from each patient, which can help fine-tune treat-

ment. The data can also help health professionals make other treatment decisions and can be useful in broader disease research.

Exercise not only affects disease progression, but also is a factor in prevention.

"For North America, it is now known that a certain lifestyle is protective, particularly exercising, low body mass index, a lot of aerobic exercise, and lack of diabetes," said Fasano. "These seem to be more protective of neurodegeneration of the type seen in Parkinson's disease."

New Clues About the Causes of Parkinson's

What causes Parkinson's is believed to be a complex interplay of genetics, risk factors like diabetes and obesity, and environmental influences, the last of which is very difficult to study. But evidence continues to point to pollution in large cities, especially two specific exposures: living next to or downwind of croplands that use certain herbicides, and being exposed to certain toxins such as those used by dry cleaners.

One link between agricultural chemicals and Parkinson's disease was discovered by accident.

In the late 1980s, attempts to concoct a heroin-like drug resulted in a chemical called MPTP, Fasano said. "And this product is extremely toxic to the cells producing dopamine. So these people injected themselves, and the next day, literally, they had severe Parkinson's that was irreversible."

MPTP is now used in animal research into Parkinson's. "So in the lab, when they want to create something that looks like Parkinson's, they use this product," Fasano said.

More important, it turns out that MPTP has a similar chemical makeup to an herbicide called Paraquat, which is banned in Europe but still used in the U.S. So researchers examined rates of the disease where the herbicide is used.

"If you look at the prevalence of Parkinson's in rural areas where there is more agriculture, you will see that there is more Parkinson's," Fasano said.

A new paper, published in January, linked higher rates of Parkinson's to areas in the Great Plains near croplands. Its lead author is Brittany Krzyzanowski, PhD, an expert in geographical analysis and spatial epi-

demiology who studies huge data sets of environmental, health, and agricultural data to better understand Parkinson's disease risk factors.

"We also decided to see if we could identify which crop types were riskier in terms of Parkinson's, because certain crop types are applied with certain pesticides," said Krzyzanowski, an assistant professor at Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix. "We found sunflowers and alfalfa fields were driving the association, likely due to the particular pesticides used on those crops."

It's also much windier in that part of the country, she said, and the pesticides might drift and affect a bigger area.

She also published a study late last year that linked Parkinson's risk to air pollution, in which the research team calculated average annual exposure to nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter – the tiny particles suspended in the air, such as from car exhaust, power plants, and wildfires.

"Right now, my models have led me to things that have already been known," Krzyzanowski said. "I've become more and more motivated to find the unknown."

Among her current projects are analyzing health data for people living near golf courses and near dry cleaners. Maybe, she said, she will identify a spot that appears to be toxic so something can be done about it.

Fasano acknowledged it's hard to calculate environmental risk or add up your own lifetime list of environmental risks.

He and others are working toward something called an "exposome."

"It means all the things that someone has been exposed to, or a lot of protective factors, that one's been exposed to throughout their life, and it's extremely difficult to study," he said. "It's never a linear relationship ... but as I said before, knowing something is about to happen, bracing for something that's about to happen, clearly gives you an advantage."

There are easy ways the average person can adjust their everyday life to reduce risk, Krzyzanowski said.

She urged people to learn about their tap water and air quality, pointing to a website by the Environmental Working Group and an app from PlumeLabs.

"There are many small steps a person can take to reduce their exposure to toxins. The primary things would be to buy organic produce, use a carbon filter for your drinking water, and consider using an indoor air purifier," she said.

...continued from page 5 — "Parkinson's Disease is Linked to Lack of Dopamine — Here's How to Boost It"

Alps, and hiking the West Highland Way in Scotland.

Both cardiovascular and strength training are important, Norris said. Cardiovascular training has been shown to improve brain-derived neurotrophic factor—described as "miracle grow" for the brain and helps to heal neurons, she said.

Strength training can offer other important benefits, such as preserving muscle, which is crucial as muscle loss is common in Parkinson's. It can also counteract the muscle stiffness and weakness that often accompany the condition, improving overall mobility and flexibility, she added.

Exercise reduces the risk of developing

Parkinson's and improves both motor and non-motor symptoms. It works in several ways, including helping the brain repair itself and promoting the growth of new brain cells and blood vessels.

Virtual Reality

Virtual reality makes exercise more engaging by transforming routine activities, like walking on a treadmill, into immersive experiences, such as strolling along a beach. Beyond simply enhancing enjoyment, VR can simulate real-world obstacles, like stepping over driftwood or seaweed, helping users practice balance and coordination in a controlled setting. Such movement can lead to real-life benefits, such as reducing the risk of falls, Misra said.

These innovations should complement, not re-

place, conventional medical care, Misra added.

Integrating artificial intelligence with virtual reality takes these innovations a step further by tracking and analyzing progress in real-time. AI can refine training programs, enhance neuroplasticity, and support brain rewiring to improve both movement and cognitive function, Misra explained. By providing instant feedback, AI helps people adjust their movements, which can, in turn, reinforce new neural pathways.

The Role of Diet

In addition to the strategies that worked for Wilson, a few other lifestyle factors might also be useful, including diet.

If blood sugar levels fluctuate and excess sugar circulates in the bloodstream, it can bind to substances in the body, forming advanced glycation end products. These harmful compounds contribute to damage in the body and play a role in the progression of neurodegenerative diseases.

To help stabilize blood sugar, reducing the intake of sugars and refined carbohydrates and ensuring meals contain sufficient protein and healthy fats can be beneficial, Norris said.

Another way to support dopamine is through tyrosine. Tyrosine is an amino acid (a building block of protein) that is turned into L-dopa in the body, which is metabolized into dopamine. Foods rich in tyrosine include beef, pork, lamb, poultry, salmon, trout, eggs, almonds, pumpkins, and sesame seeds, Chaytor-Norris said.

Sleep

Along with dopamine-boosting activities, exercise, and diet, quality and duration of sleep should also be considered.

"It would be remiss of me not to mention the importance of sleep in relation to Parkinson's, as toxicity is a key underlying factor," Norris said.

Sleep is the body's only opportunity to detoxify and cleanse the brain. Maintaining a regular sleep routine, such as going to bed at the same time each night, is crucial. Ideally, waking up naturally, without the jarring sound of an alarm clock, is also highly beneficial, she said.

On a related note, investigating potential sources of excess toxicity in the body, such as heavy metals, mold, or glyphosate, and supporting the body in clearing these toxins can have profoundly positive effects, Chaytor-Norris added.

Starts with Willingness

"Sometimes it feels like you need to throw 'everything and the kitchen sink' at Parkinson's disease to optimize outcomes," Misra said.

Engaging patients with a Parkinson's diagnosis can be challenging, but with such a debilitating condition, a comprehensive approach is often necessary.

"Whether or not there's a genetic link, life with Parkinson's can still be lived well," Wilson said. "But it all starts with a willingness to help yourself."

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PARKINSON'S PERSPECTIVE

JUNE 2025

Coming Events

See inside for more information

June 7th: Reg Mtg at Central United Methodist Church —10 am

Program: How to Prevent / Reverse Parkinson's through Nutrition **Speaker:** Dr. Bruce Fife, C.N., N.D.

July 5th: Reg Mtg at Central United Methodist Church - 10 am

Program: Break-Out Sessions

(Caregivers & Parkinsonians separate into different rooms to talk)

August 2: Save the Date — Annual Picnic at the Park!!

Location & Time: Barn Pavilion at John Venezia Park - 11 am

September 6: Reg Mtg at Central United Methodist Church - 10 am

Program: Mobile Physical Therapy Services for people with PD

Speaker: Ryan Mueller, PT, DPT, NCS

October 4: Reg Mtg at Central United Methodist Church - 10 am

Program: TBD; **Speaker:** TBD

November 1: Reg Mtg at Central United Methodist Church - 10 am

Program: Break-out Sessions

(Caregivers & Parkinsonians separate into different rooms to talk)

December 6: Save the Date — Annual Christmas Party!!

Location & Time: Central United Methodist Church - 10 am

Program: Christmas Party!!

Entertainment: The Song Spinners

More useful websites:

<https://parkinsonsnewstoday.com>; www.parkinsonrockies.org; www.parkinson.org; www.nwpf.org; michaeljfoxfoundation.org;
<http://caremap.parkinson.org>; <https://www.brainhq.com/world-class-science/published-research/active-study>;
www.davisphinneyfoundation.org/living-pd/webinar/videos/cognitive-nonmotor-symptoms-parkinsons; www.parkinsonheartland.org;
<https://www.pdself.org>; https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkPlhQnN7cN6dAJZ5K5zQzY84btUTLo_C; pmdalliance.org;
<https://www.michaeljfox.org/foundation/news-detail.php?self-care-tips-for-parkinson-disease-caregivers>