



YOUR FIRST SPECIALIST VISIT

Preparing for Your First Movement-Disorder Appointment

A practical workbook for people being evaluated for Parkinson's or another movement disorder

START WITH YOUR TOP THREE. A first appointment may cover a great deal. Write down the three concerns that matter most and share them near the beginning of the visit.

Appointment details

Specialist	
Date and time	
Clinic / address	
Clinic phone	
Who is coming with me	

My three priorities

1	
2	
3	

1. Two Weeks Before the Visit Confirm requirements and begin a short symptom record

- ☐ Call the clinic to confirm the date, arrival time, location, parking, insurance requirements and expected visit length.
- ☐ Ask whether new-patient forms can be completed before arrival.
- ☐ Ask exactly which records the office needs and whether they must be sent in advance.
- ☐ Ask whether imaging reports, actual image files/discs, laboratory results or prior neurology notes are needed.
- ☐ Ask whether you should take all medicines at the usual times on appointment day. Do not hold or change medication unless the clinic gives specific instructions.
- ☐ Confirm whether the appointment is in person or by video and request accessibility or language assistance if needed.
- ☐ Begin a brief symptom diary showing what happens, when it happens and how it affects daily activities.

MEDICATION SAFETY A specialist may sometimes want to see symptoms at a particular point in a medication cycle. Follow the clinic's instructions; never skip or delay medication on your own.

Records to gather

- ☐ Photo identification, insurance card and referral or authorization, if required
- ☐ Current medication and supplement list with doses, timing and reason for use
- ☐ Names and contact information for primary care, neurology and other relevant clinicians
- ☐ Relevant clinic notes, test results, imaging reports and image files requested by the specialist
- ☐ Hospitalization, surgery and allergy information
- ☐ Family history of Parkinson's, tremor, dementia or other neurological conditions

Important dates

Symptoms first noticed	
First medical visit	
Diagnosis discussed	
Treatment started / changed	

2. Tell the Story of Your Symptoms Focus on timing, pattern and impact

Describe symptoms in your own words. Note what makes them better or worse, whether they affect one or both sides, and what you can no longer do as easily.

Movement symptoms

- ☐ Tremor or shaking
- ☐ Slowness of movement
- ☐ Stiffness or pain
- ☐ Walking, balance, freezing or falls
- ☐ Smaller handwriting or reduced dexterity
- ☐ Changes in posture, facial expression or voice
- ☐ Involuntary twisting or extra movements

Non-movement symptoms

- ☐ Sleep problems or acting out dreams
- ☐ Constipation, urinary changes or sweating
- ☐ Dizziness or faintness when standing
- ☐ Loss of smell
- ☐ Anxiety, depression, apathy or irritability
- ☐ Fatigue or daytime sleepiness
- ☐ Memory, attention or thinking changes
- ☐ Swallowing, drooling or weight changes

SHORT VIDEOS CAN HELP If a symptom comes and goes, ask whether the clinic accepts phone videos. Record only when it is safe. Show the affected body part—or full body for walking—and note the date, time and medication timing. Do not intentionally trigger a fall or unsafe movement.

My symptom summary

Most concerning symptom	
When it started	
When it is best / worst	
Effect on daily life	
What others have noticed	

3. Prepare the Details Medication, goals and questions

Medication and supplement list

MEDICINE / SUPPLEMENT	DOSE	TIME(S)	WHY I TAKE IT	BENEFIT / SIDE EFFECT

Goals and daily life

ACTIVITIES I MOST WANT TO PROTECT OR REGAIN:

CHANGES AFFECTING WORK, DRIVING, HOBBIES, EXERCISE OR RELATIONSHIPS:

MY BIGGEST SAFETY CONCERN:

WHAT I HOPE TO UNDERSTAND OR DECIDE AT THIS VISIT:

Questions to bring

- ☐ What diagnoses are you considering, and what findings support them?
- ☐ Do I need additional testing, and would the result change treatment?
- ☐ What should I track between visits?
- ☐ Should I begin medication, exercise, physical therapy, occupational therapy or speech therapy?
- ☐ What symptoms should prompt a call before the next appointment?

4. Appointment Day Make the visit easier to navigate

- ☐ Wear comfortable clothing and shoes that allow the clinician to observe walking and movement.
- ☐ Bring glasses, hearing aids, mobility devices and any adaptive equipment you normally use.
- ☐ Bring your medication list—and medication bottles if the clinic requested them.
- ☐ Bring your symptom notes, videos and top-three priorities in an easy-to-find folder or phone album.
- ☐ Ask your care partner to take notes and share observations without speaking over you.
- ☐ Tell the clinician your main concerns early; do not wait until the final minutes.
- ☐ Before leaving, repeat back the plan in your own words and confirm whom to contact with questions.

What to expect

The specialist will usually review your medical, family and symptom history and perform a neurological examination. The exam may include observation of facial expression, speech, eye movements, hand movements, stiffness, coordination, standing, posture and walking. Testing and treatment decisions should be individualized and discussed collaboratively.

My visit summary

Working diagnosis	
Tests ordered	
Medication instructions	
Therapy / other referrals	
What I should track	
Next appointment / who to call	

Trusted sources

Parkinson's Foundation: parkinson.org

Michael J. Fox Foundation: michaelfox.org

International Parkinson and Movement Disorder Society specialist finder: mds.movementdisorders.org/specialist-finder

VA Parkinson's Disease Research, Education and Clinical Centers: parkinsons.va.gov

IMPORTANT This workbook supports appointment preparation and does not diagnose a condition or replace professional medical advice. Seek urgent medical care for emergency or life-threatening symptoms.

