

OBTAINING ASSISTIVE DEVICES AND HOME ADAPTATIONS

Many of the everyday challenges of Parkinson's disease (PD) can be alleviated through the use of assistive devices. For those who have problems with walking and balance, mobility aids such as canes, walkers, scooters, and wheelchairs can be a significant help. Other motor symptom challenges can be helped with tools such as adaptive eating and cooking utensils, book holders, specialized handles and grips, and more. People with PD may also adapt their home environment with ramps, grab bars, and accessible appliances, sinks, toilets, baths and showers.

Requesting a Home Safety Assessment

An important first step in addressing your safety needs is to contact your local health authority to request a home safety assessment. The phone number for local health authorities can be obtained from **Service BC** (1-800-663-7867). When you call your local health unit, have this information on hand:

- Home address
- Personal Health Number (on your B.C. Care card)
- Name and phone number of the doctor who manages your Parkinson's

This home safety assessment is usually done by an Occupational Therapist (OT) or Physiotherapist (PT) who will determine if you would benefit from an assistive device and/or any home adaptations. The OT/PT can give instructions and advice on adaptive equipment, safety awareness, energy conservation, renovations and mobility issues.

It is important to obtain the opinion of an OT/PT prior to purchasing any equipment and prior to beginning any renovations in order to select the most appropriate equipment for your individual needs. In addition, most funding agencies require a letter of medical justification from an OT/PT or other medical professional prior to approving requests for assistance.

Requests for reimbursement for equipment or home adaptations purchased and paid for prior to approval can be rejected. Parkinson Society British Columbia does not provide funding towards these devices and adaptations, nor are we able to coordinate an equipment exchange.

Additional Resources

For a home safety assessment, contact your **local health authority**:

Fraser Health | www.fraserhealth.ca | 604-953-4965

Interior Health | www.interiorhealth.ca/yourcare/homecommunitycare

Northern Health | www.northernhealth.ca/yourhealth/homeandcommunitycare

Vancouver Coastal Health | www.vch.ca | 604-263-7377

Vancouver Island Health Authority | www.islandhealth.ca | 250-388-2273 | 1-888-533-2273

For information about government programs providing equipment and assistive aids:

BC Assistive Devices & Disability Support | bit.ly/2RCS9rr | 1-800-663-7867 | EnquiryBC@gov.bc.ca

For help finding community, social, or government services:

BC211 | www.bc211.ca | Call or Text 2-1-1

For short-term equipment loans (availability varies):

Red Cross Medical Equipment Loan Service | www.redcross.ca | 1-800-278-7177

For health supplements, including medically essential equipment and devices to meet individuals' basic mobility, hearing, positioning, and breathing needs:

Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation | 1-866-866-0800

For veteran health benefits, including medical, surgical and dental care, prescription drugs, and hearing and vision aids (eligibility and availability varies):

Veterans Affairs Canada | www.veterans.gc.ca | 1-866-522-2122

For Augmentative Communications Systems, for those who cannot speak or write to communicate with others, and Environmental Control Systems, for those who need assistance with their environment such as telephones, light switches, door and entry access, and entertainment systems:

Technology for Independent Living | www.bcits.org | 604-326-0175

For affordable custom assistive devices, including those for needs that cannot be met by commercially available products:

Tetra Society | www.tetrasociety.org | 1-877-688-8762

For rehabilitation equipment and assistive devices:

MEDiChair | www.medichair.com | 1-800-661-1416

For information on forgivable loans to low income owners and renters to adapt their homes for safety and accessibility:

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation | www.cmhc.ca | 1-800-668-2642

In addition to the resources listed above, consider the following:

- Insurance benefits available through an employer may be an option for reimbursement of associated costs. Contact your extended medical insurance company for more information.
- Service clubs may be approached for assistance with the purchase of equipment or home adaptations.
- Use of personal savings is sometimes required, but explore other options first.