

SPECIAL NOTICE

In response to the global outbreak of COVID-19, Parkinson Society BC (PSBC) staff are working remotely until further notice. We will continue to offer programs and services in alternate formats. For the most up-to-date information, visit this web page: www.parkinson.bc.ca/coronavirus. If you have any questions, please contact us at info@parkinson.bc.ca.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Improv: Performance Troupe** | Wednesdays, September 14 – November 30
Learn more & register: <https://tightropetheatre.com/parkinsons-improv-troupe>
 - **SongShine with Joani**
 - **Fall 2022 Sessions** | Thursdays, October 6 – November 10
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/songshine-fall22>
 - **Winter 2022 Sessions** | Thursdays, November 17 – December 15
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/songshine-winter22>
 - **Virtual Open House** | Thursday, November 17
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/3LMND6O>
 - **Dance the Holidays** | Tuesdays, November 15 – December 13
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/danceholidays>
 - **Ask the Expert: Safety and Independence Using Assistive Devices** | Wednesday, November 23
Learn more & register: <https://bit.ly/assistivedevices>
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UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Champions for Parkinson's

- Donate a Car Canada: Ongoing (read more: <http://bit.ly/2ORTuJn>)

We're looking for more Champions!

Do you want to help fund research, grow support networks, and improve quality of life for those living with Parkinson's disease (PD)? Become a Champion for Parkinson's and plan your own independent community fundraising event! Contact us at events@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330.

TIP JAR

The Tip Jar is where we share advice from Parkinson's community members. This month we share a tip on making a daily task easier, such as clipping your nails. As a person with Parkinson's, this may become a cumbersome task if the nail clippers are sliding around or you can't get enough of a tactile grip.

Community member, Grant Sheinin shares a helpful tip.

"When using a pair of nail clippers, wrap Band-Aids around the handles to provide extra grip to the clippers."

Try this quick tip out and see if it makes your daily routine a bit easier!

Do you have any tips or tricks that you would like to share with the Parkinson's community? These can be tips from something that works well, to eating and dressing, to getting out of bed or travelling! All tips and tricks are welcome! Please share your ideas at info@parkinson.bc.ca.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS***Parkinson SuperWalk is back this September in person!***

Thank you to everyone who joined us to celebrate at Parkinson SuperWalk the weekend of September 10 and 11. We are humbled by the efforts of our volunteers and participants, as well as grateful for all our donors. Totals, including individual, team, location, and provincial, will be announced in late October or early November at www.parkinson.bc.ca/superwalk. Our website will be open for donations until December 31, 2022.

Renew your membership or become a member of Parkinson Society BC

Membership fees and donations are a critical source of funding for Parkinson Society British Columbia. A strong membership gives us a louder voice on matters of importance to the Parkinson's community.

Our membership year runs from January 1 to December 31. Memberships purchased on or after

September 1 will be valid from the point of payment through the end of the following calendar year. The cost of membership is \$25 per household. Learn more at:

www.parkinson.bc.ca/membership

NEW! DBS Support Group

Parkinson Society British Columbia is offering an online support group for those who have had Deep Brain Stimulation surgery. Members can expect a safe space to support each other and engage through sharing their experiences, feelings, coping strategies and knowledge about Parkinson's and DBS. *Meeting on Zoom. 3rd Tuesday of each month 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm PT.* Register here: <https://airtable.com/shrfFIN2ewQv5rVWW>

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Fall Prevention

Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the fall risks you have encountered, and how have you worked to prevent them in your home and/or away from home?
2. What motor symptoms do you currently experience that may have an impact on your balance and falling risk?
3. Are there any exercises you do to help prevent falls?

November is fall prevention month. In this issue we will explore potential causes of falls, as they relate to Parkinson's disease (PD), along with useful tips on how to prevent injurious falls. To begin, PD causes brain changes in the basal ganglia – the part that is directly responsible for balance – which in turn causes difficulties with balance and walking.

“To compensate, the brain assigns another brain area – an area used for thinking – to take over. The thinking part of the brain, mainly the frontal cortex, can't control balance automatically” (Walking with Parkinson's: Freezing, Balance and Falls, 2018). This means that people with PD must pay more conscious attention to the act of walking and use more cognitive control for balance and gait.

Another element that causes trouble with movement is the impairment of dopamine cells. “Dopamine is a chemical messenger (neurotransmitter) that is primarily responsible for controlling movement, emotional responses and the ability to feel pleasure and pain” (Movement Symptoms, n.d.). As the disease progresses, more dopamine-producing brain cells die, until eventually the brain is not producing a significant amount any longer – thus causing problems with movement.

Motor Symptoms in Parkinson’s and Falling

Those with Parkinson’s are at a greater risk of falling due to the motor symptoms of the disease. These include loss of balance, muscle rigidity, tremor, and slowness of movement which is also known as bradykinesia. Posture and gait issues may also add to this risk, along with blurry vision and dizziness caused by a drop in blood pressure when making movements and/or shifting positions (Ansari, 2016).

These symptoms can impact the way a person with Parkinson’s walks, making normal steps difficult (Walking with Parkinson's: Freezing, Balance and Falls, 2018). Therefore, they can often be seen taking shuffled steps and “freezing”, which shows up for those with mid-stage to advanced PD and is “the feeling that your feet are stuck to the floor” (Walking with Parkinson's: Freezing, Balance and Falls, 2018).

Fall Prevention Techniques

It is important to keep a steady routine and avoid too many changes within the home if possible. In other words: **create a space you’re accustomed to and comfortable with**. Learn the ins and outs of your home, by familiarizing yourself with furniture like couches, tables, counters, and places you can grab onto if needed. If caregivers and/or family members make changes to the person’s surroundings it is essential to let them know to avoid confusion and potential accidents (Ansari, 2016).

Another tip to avoid falls is to **remove tripping hazards** such as rugs that can bunch up, and neatly place power cords completely out of the way (i.e. taping them against the wall or bundling them up and placing out of a high-traffic area). You can also add night lights, so the

person with PD can easily get around at in the dark and see their surroundings clearly (Ansari, 2016). When walking, it is best to **avoid multi-tasking** and focus completely on the task of walking. This means not getting distracted by talking to someone, scrolling through your phone, or rummaging through your bag. Moreover, **take your time standing up**. Dizziness can be the cause of many falls for people with PD (through orthostatic hypotension) so it is essential to take things slow, and if needed use assistance like a wall, grab bars, or a table. Ensure that you are steady and you have a solid grip if dizziness does occur.

The bath tub and bathroom present many fall hazards due to its slippery surfaces. You can remedy this by **using grip and anti-slip devices**. Have grab bars installed near the bathtub to assist in safe entry and exit of the bath tub, as well as using an anti-slip shower mat. You may even want to consider an adjustable shower chair to avoid standing for long periods of time in a slippery area.

Lastly, there is the importance of exercise. “Exercise is the only intervention that significantly reduces a person’s risk of falling, among older people without PD as well as people with Parkinson’s. Research is beginning to show how exercise changes the brain for the better and can help people with PD gain back some of their automatic balance reflex” (Walking with Parkinson's: Freezing, Balance and Falls, 2018). Exercises to improve balance include boxing, dance, and tai chi – anything that makes you sweat!

Talk to Your Doctor

As always, each person with Parkinson’s is different, depending on which stage you’re at, your age, and overall physicality. Talk to your doctor to properly assess what your specific fall risk is, and specialized adjustments can be made according to your needs. This may look like a change in your medication, or the use of assistance products like a walker or a cane to make getting around easier (Ansari, 2016).

Additional Resources

- Bathroom Safety | Helpsheet | [[helpsheet](#)]
- Assistive Devices, Home Adaptations and Funding | Helpsheet | [[helpsheet](#)]
- Dyskinesia | Helpsheet | [[helpsheet](#)]
- In-home Safety Check | Helpsheet | [[helpsheet](#)]
- Balance & Falls Prevention Exercise Series [[view playlist](#)]
- Balance and Falls: Joining the Puzzle Pieces | Shelly Yu [[view video](#)] [[view slides](#)]

Sources

Ansari, F. (2016, March 24). *Five fall prevention strategies for people with Parkinson's disease*. The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research | Parkinson's Disease. Retrieved October 26, 2022, from <https://www.michaeljfox.org/news/five-fall-prevention-strategies-people-parkinsons-disease>

Movement Symptoms. Parkinson's Foundation. (n.d.). Retrieved October 26, 2022, from <https://www.parkinson.org/understanding-parkinsons/symptoms/movement-symptoms>

Walking with Parkinson's: Freezing, Balance and Falls. Parkinson's Foundation. (2018, February 28). Retrieved October 26, 2022, from <https://www.parkinson.org/blog/awareness/freezing>