

# Occupational Therapy and Parkinson's Disease

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# Outline

- ▶ What is Occupational Therapy?
- ▶ How does Parkinson's affect function?
- ▶ General Motor Strategies
- ▶ Freezing of Gait
- ▶ Sit to stand
- ▶ Personal Care Strategies
- ▶ Home Safety
- ▶ Mobility
- ▶ Additional strategies to manage PD

# What is Occupational Therapy (OT)?

- ▶ OTs focus on function
- ▶ OTs assess, treat and help people with their occupations after an injury or illness
- ▶ This includes:
  - ▶ Personal Care
  - ▶ Household roles/tasks
  - ▶ Mobility
  - ▶ Community access
  - ▶ Other functional tasks

Disclaimer: The information provided does not replace recommendations from health care provider

# How does Parkinson's affect function?

- ▶ Changes in movements:
  - ▶ Speed
  - ▶ Strength
  - ▶ Coordination
  - ▶ Tremors
  - ▶ Stiffness
  - ▶ Balance
  - ▶ Vision
  - ▶ Freezing of Gait

# General Motor Strategies:

- ▶ Move BIG
- ▶ Think BIG (Visualization)
- ▶ Move with intention and focus
- ▶ Heel first
- ▶ Pay extra attention to your feet
- ▶ Focus on a target
- ▶ STOP-THINK-GO

# Freezing of Gait

- 1) Stop
- 2) Breath
- 3) Strategy

## ▶ Freezing of Gait Strategies:

- ▶ March
- ▶ Count/music/hum
- ▶ Sway
- ▶ Step over line (laser/tape)

# Sit to Stand

## ► Technique and position is key

- 1) Move towards edge of chair
- 2) Feet under knees
- 3) **Nose PAST toes** (Lean forward and push up to stand)

If you need more help, try:

- Higher chairs
- Have someone stand in front of you to hold your hands and encourage you to lean forward
- Practice

# Personal Care

- ▶ Personal care includes toileting, bathing, and dressing
- ▶ Also called Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)



# Functional Strategies: Showering

- ▶ Consider your energy level and choose the best time
- ▶ Consider how often you need a full shower versus sponge bath
- ▶ Walk in shower versus bathtub
- ▶ Sit down to reduce multitasking demand
- ▶ Use equipment/tools as needed
- ▶ Ask for help when showering
- ▶ If you have a falls alert system (eg. Life Line) wear it in the shower

# Showering Equipment



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# Functional Strategies: Dressing

- ▶ Think BIG movements
- ▶ Sit on a chair/bench
- ▶ Hand flicks before small tasks
- ▶ Wear 'easy to wear' clothes if needed  
(pull over shirts, elastic waist pants)
- ▶ Shirts/jackets - push arm quickly into jacket sleeve and swing over shoulder
- ▶ Buttons - pull clothes away from your body and push your thumb through the buttonhole to aim the button

# Dressing Aids



# Functional Strategies: Toileting

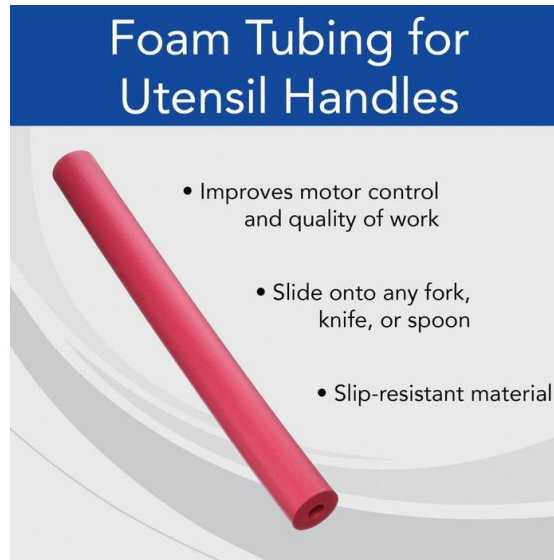
- ▶ Practice sit to stand method
- ▶ Bathroom lighting and flooring
- ▶ Equipment
- ▶ Timing/schedule

# Toileting Equipment



# Functional Strategies: Eating

- ▶ Positioning
- ▶ Hand flicks
- ▶ Cutlery/plates/cups
- ▶ Contrast



# Functional Strategies: Food prep/cooking

- ▶ Easy to make food
- ▶ Adapted Aids
- ▶ Sitting versus standing
- ▶ Multitasking risk





# Functional Strategies: Medication

- ▶ With PD it is important to take your medications on time every time
  - ▶ Alarms
  - ▶ Reminders
  - ▶ Routine
  - ▶ Organizers
  - ▶ Blister Packs
  - ▶ Automatic dispensers



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# Functional Strategies: Safety

## ▶ Home Safety

- ▶ Automatic night lights/increased contrast
- ▶ Remove clutter especially on stairs
- ▶ Handrails on stairs
- ▶ Bed at a good height to get in and out
- ▶ Have items within easy reach
- ▶ Have a cordless phone near by

## ▶ Falls/Emergency Alert system

# Mobility

- ▶ Assessment
- ▶ Safety and equipment
- ▶ Multitasking risk when walking
- ▶ Freezing of Gait
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Getting off chairs 'Nose past your toes'

# Bed Mobility

- ▶ Set-up
  - ▶ Bed height
  - ▶ Sheets/blankets/pajamas
  - ▶ Bed Assist Rail
- ▶ Sit to lie
  - ▶ Move into side lying (Lean onto your elbow)
  - ▶ Lift feet onto bed
  - ▶ Turn onto your back
- ▶ Moving in bed
  - ▶ Place your feet on the bed with knees bent
  - ▶ Lift your hips (bridge)
  - ▶ Push to move up
  - ▶ Lift and move hips to the side and then move shoulders and feet

# Car Transfers

- ▶ Turn towards car door
  - ▶ Sit as far back on the seat as possible
  - ▶ Sit first and then lift legs into car
- 
- ▶ Tips
    - ▶ Move seat back
    - ▶ Garbage bag on seat
    - ▶ Handybar



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# What impacts Parkinson's symptoms?

- ▶ Sleep
- ▶ Stress
- ▶ Hydration
- ▶ Brain Activities
- ▶ Exercise

# Sleep

- ▶ The brain needs sleep to recover and function well
- ▶ Poor sleep impacts cognition and function

Bubu, OM et al. (2017).  
Cavusoglu, C. et al. (2021).

# Sleep Strategies

- ▶ Bladder – talk to your doctor
- ▶ Routine
  - ▶ Allow enough time to get sleep
  - ▶ Go to bed/wake up at the same time
- ▶ Limit Napping
- ▶ Relaxation
- ▶ Room set-up
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Exposure to daylight



# Stress and Cognition

- ▶ Stress reduces brain function
- ▶ Difficulties concentrating
- ▶ Poor memory
- ▶ Confusion

# Stress Strategies

- ▶ Keep life simple
- ▶ Work at reducing stress
- ▶ Manage stress with relaxation, exercise, routine, mindfulness
- ▶ Access supports
  - ▶ Health Care team, PD Connect, family/friends, Home support

# Hydration

- ▶ Drink more water!
  - ▶ 2 glasses when you wake up
  - ▶ A glass with every meal and with your medications
  - ▶ Follow instructions from your doctor if you need to limit fluids

Mantantzis, K. et al (2021).  
Edmonds, C, et al (2021).

# Brain Activities

- ▶ Keep your brain busy
  - ▶ Reading/Audio books or Pod Casts
  - ▶ Games
  - ▶ Word Searches
  - ▶ Social Interactions
- ▶ New activities/purpose
  - ▶ Find new hobbies and add them to your schedule
  - ▶ Learn something new

# Exercise

- ▶ Very important for brain health
- ▶ Helps keep a routine
- ▶ Helps with mood
- ▶ Improves strength and balance
- ▶ Helps with your sleep
- ▶ Start small and build over time

**All movement is Good Movement!**

# Take Home Messages

- ▶ Set up your home well
- ▶ Use tools/equipment
- ▶ Focus on your feet
- ▶ Toes PAST your toes
- ▶ Keep your brain active
- ▶ Get more sleep
- ▶ Drink more water
- ▶ Keep life simple and reduce stress
- ▶ Ask for help
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Talk to your Health Care Team for support

Thank you for your  
attention

Questions?