

BLADDER DYSFUNCTION IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE

One third of people with Parkinson's disease (PD) experience bladder control issues. The most common problem is a hyperactive bladder, which can cause:

- a sense of urgency or inability to hold in urine
- frequent urination (over 7 times daily)
- waking up one or more times every night to urinate (known as *Nocturia*)

Hyperactive bladder is related to numerous areas of degeneration in PD, including the nerve cells that control the bladder directly, the motor areas affected in PD, and sometimes, the higher-level control of urination in the brain.

Although uncommon, some people with PD may also experience a hypoactive bladder. Symptoms include:

- difficulty starting urination
- a sensation of not completely emptying your bladder
- leakage of urine

Not all bladder problems in people with PD are caused by the disease itself. Frequent urination can also appear in men with prostate problems; this is often accompanied by a slow or hesitant urine stream. If you are seeing a urologist for your bladder problem, make sure they are aware that you have Parkinson's. Finding alternate explanations for your urinary problems is important for treatment, as bladder issues related to PD would not improve with surgical operations on the prostate.

Treatment

If you are having trouble with hyperactive bladder, try to schedule bathroom trips at regular intervals, especially if you know a bathroom may not be nearby at some point during your day.

There are several options that decrease the urgency and frequency to urinate. Sometimes, the medications for the motor symptoms of Parkinson's can help the bladder problem. Your doctor may also suggest anticholinergic medications (Oxybutynin, Tolteridone) or trospium chloride (Trosec). If you have memory problems or hallucinations, anticholinergic medications should be avoided, as they can potentially worsen these symptoms.

Desmopressin, a nasal spray, is often recommended for nighttime urination. This drug reduces the formation of urine. A rare but dangerous side effect of this drug is low salt levels in the blood. If you start taking this drug, you will need routine blood tests.

Sources

Postuma, R., and Galatas, C. A Guide to the Non-Motor Symptoms of Parkinson's Disease. (2012). Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/nonmotorsymptomguide>