



## Basic Sleep Strategies

Most people with Parkinson's disease have difficulty sleeping. There are many causes of sleep disturbances in Parkinson's disease, but some basic sleep hygiene strategies can be used by everyone to improve sleep quality:

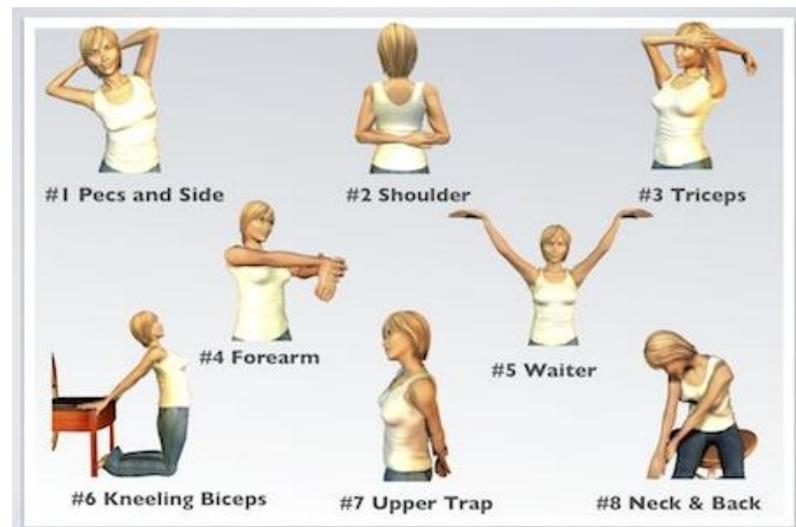


### Nutrition intake:

- Drink fluids during the day and avoid fluids close to bedtime.
- Decrease caffeine intake or limit it to before 10 a.m. Caffeine may be in tea, coffee, soda, chocolate, & energy drinks.
- Eat small frequent meals (6 meals a day).
- Stay away from big meals in the evening.
- If hungry at bedtime eat a healthy snack like a banana, half turkey sandwich or small bowl of whole-grain cereal
- Quit smoking (nicotine is a stimulant).
- Avoid alcohol (reduces your sleep quality).

### Throughout the daytime:

- Spend no more than 30 minutes napping.
- Participate in activities such as visiting friends, shopping or playing music).
- Wake up at the same time every day.
- Get sunlight throughout the day
- Do exercises (simple stretches, walking or yoga).
- Decrease fatigue by exercising, eating well and managing stress.



### At Bedtime:

- Maintain a quiet environment by keeping bedroom dark, turning off the TV and computer, and avoiding bright lights; these help boost melatonin production throughout the night.
- Use relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, visualization, muscle relaxation (start from your toes), read a book or magazine, take a warm bath or listen to soft music
- Avoid drinking too many liquids in the evening to reduce nighttime urination
- Keep the bedroom at a comfortable temperature

# Sleep Complications:



- **Medications wearing off:** Difficulty with turning or getting in or out of bed may worsen as your Parkinson's disease progresses. Profuse sweating may also be experienced.
  - Talk with your physician about adjusting nighttime doses of medications
  - Install bed rails, or use a floor-to-ceiling pole to aid in getting in and out of bed.
  - Use satin sheets or nightwear to make movement easier once in bed.
- **Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA):** In this condition, airflow ceases periodically often in association with snoring. These episodes are often accompanied by decreased levels of oxygen in the blood and can result in excessive daytime sleepiness, high blood pressure and increased risk of stroke and heart disease.
  - In mild cases, the treatment may be as simple as adjusting your sleep position. Often, however, the treatment consists of wearing a facemask or nasal device connected to a small machine called a CPAP that applies positive pressure to keep the airways open and facilitate airflow. It may take some adjustments to get used to wearing the device during sleep, so you may need to work with your physician until the mask fits comfortably. Consistent use of the CPAP machine will result in more restful sleep as well as increased alertness throughout the daytime.
- **REM Sleep Behavior Disorder (RBD):** Rapid Eye Movement, or REM sleep is the phase of sleep during which dreams occur. Normally, people are immobile during this phase, but with RBD people may act out their dreams by thrashing around, yelling out or even physically harming whoever is nearby. Symptoms may respond to small doses of clonazepam, which your doctor may prescribe. However, like any sedating medication, this must be used cautiously to avoid falls or confusion during the night. Patients with OSA should have this condition treated before starting medications to avoid worsening the sleep apnea.
- **Early Morning waking:** Many patients are able to fall asleep but awaken frequently during the night or wake up early in the morning and are unable to go back to sleep. The patient may describe worrying thoughts that often result from anxiety or even depression. This may be caused by changes in the brain chemicals associated with Parkinson's disease. For this reason, treatment of mood with a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) may be advised by physician. Good sleep hygiene is important.
- **Restless leg syndrome:** Is an irresistible urge to move one's body to stop uncomfortable or odd sensations that most commonly affects the legs. Moving the affected body part reduces the sensations, providing temporary relief. For symptoms that occur in the evening, patients may find that activities that alert the mind, such as puzzles or games, may reduce symptoms. Relaxation techniques, soaking in a warm bath, or massaging the legs can all help aid in relaxation and relief of symptoms. In some cases your doctor may adjust your medications to help reduce symptoms.

