

10 Early Signs of Parkinson's Disease

March 2019



1. Tremor

Have you noticed a slight shaking or tremor in your finger, thumb, hand or chin? A tremor while at rest is a common early sign of Parkinson's disease.

What is normal?

Shaking can be normal after lots of exercise, if you are stressed or if you have been injured. Shaking could also be caused by a medicine you take.

2. Small Handwriting

Has your handwriting gotten much smaller than it was in the past? You may notice the way you write words on a page has changed, such as letter sizes are smaller, and the words are crowded together. A change in handwriting may be a sign of Parkinson's disease called *micrographia*.

What is normal?

Sometimes writing can change as you get older, if you have stiff hands or fingers or poor vision.

3. Loss of Smell

Have you noticed you no longer smell certain foods very well? If you seem to have more trouble smelling foods like bananas, dill pickles or licorice, you should ask your doctor about Parkinson's.

What is normal?

Your sense of smell can be changed by a cold, flu or a stuffy nose, but it should come back when you are better.

4. Trouble Sleeping

Do you thrash around in bed or act out dreams when you are deeply asleep? Sometimes, your spouse will notice or will want to move to another bed. Sudden movements during sleep may be a sign of Parkinson's disease.

What is normal?

It is normal for everyone to have a night when they 'toss and turn' instead of sleeping. Similarly, quick jerks of the body when initiating sleep or when in lighter sleep are common and often normal.

5. Trouble Moving or Walking

Do you feel stiff in your body, arms or legs? Have others noticed that your arms don't swing like they used to when you walk? Sometimes stiffness goes away as you move. If it does not, it can be a sign of Parkinson's disease. An early sign might be stiffness or pain in your shoulder or hips. People sometimes say their feet seem "stuck to the floor."

What is normal?

If you have injured your arm or shoulder, you may not be able to use it as well until it is healed, or another illness like arthritis might cause the same symptom.

(see next page for early signs 6-10)

**Information provided by the Parkinson's Foundation.*

How do I know?

It can be hard to tell if you or a loved one has Parkinson's disease (PD).

Here are 10 signs that you might have the disease.

No single one of these signs means that you should worry, but if you have more than one sign you should consider making an appointment to talk to your doctor.



Greenville Area
Parkinson Society

We Walk With You.

COME WALK WITH US!

Our mission is to maximize the quality of life for families affected by Parkinson's Disease.

*For more information,
visit us at:*

gapsonline.org

P.O. Box 6505
Greenville, SC 29606
info@gapsonline.org
864.905.2574