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Dear caregiver,

If you care for someone who is diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, you may find the following information useful.

What is the Impairment of Parkinson's disease?

Parkinson's is a chronic and progressive neurological disorder that affects a person's physical and mental (and/or cognitive) abilities.

Parkinson's is a chronic and progressive disorder. As the disease progresses, the patient is Requires to assistance for basic activities of daily living. It is important to remember that each patient have different and individual symptoms that can vary in severity.

There is no cure for Parkinson's disease. The only treatment is to mitigate symptoms and improve quality of life of the patient. Medicinal treatment of Parkinson's disease is varied and is likely to change with the progression of the disease.

In the advanced stages of the disease, drugs have a low effect on treatment. In early stages, in addition to medicinal treatment, it is recommended to introduce supporting treatment to improve physical ability and encourage functional preservation such as; occupational, physical, and speech therapy.

Symptoms:

- muscle stiffness
- slowness
- Small movements
- changes in walking- small steps, slow walking
- Freezing of gait- - brief and sudden episodes of inability to initiate walking or to continue moving forward, despite the intention to walk. Freezing of gait is commonly described by patients as 'being glued to the ground.
- Tremor while at rest
- balance impairment
- Decreased automatic movement (absence of facial expression, decreased blinking)
- Additional nonmotor symptoms include - cognitive decline, trouble swallowing, psychosis, hallucinations, depression, chronic pain,

orthostatic hypotension- a sudden drop in blood pressure that causes;
falls and dizziness, sleep deprivation, constipation, loss of smell.

What do the terms ON and OFF mean? In other words, what are motor fluctuations?

"ON" state- a positive reaction to drug therapy. Sometimes, it is accompanied by dyskinesia (i.e. excess involuntary movements)

"OFF" state- in this state the effect of drugs has worn off and the symptoms of the disease reappear, the patient may encounter struggles in functional movement.

The drug treatment allows for a prolonged ON state. With the progression of the disease, the length of the OFF state increases

Motor fluctuations are temporary changes, varying in length from minutes to hours between the ON and OFF stages.

Drug balance ideally leads to prolonged ON stages, allowing patients to maintain routine and functionality. It is important to consult with family members, a neurologist or G.P before changing dosage or medicine.

How can I help my patient function better?

1. Strict adherence to dose and usage instructions for all medication.
2. Maintain a balanced daily routine - it is recommended to structure the day around ON and OFF states. For example, to plan outings and physical exercise during the patients ON state.

* it is also recommended to prioritize activities that require physical activity for the ON hours. It is important to integrate respite activities throughout the day and cognitive stimulating activities, it is important to diversify activities to encourage learning, interest, and cognitive retention.
3. Encourage the patient to do daily exercise. Ensure that it is an exercise the patient enjoys and that it is Appropriate to the patient's physical abilities. For example, activities can be done while sitting, standing, or lying down.
4. Pace- use an external pace keeper such as music, clapping, or counting to help the patient with the movement.
5. Not everything at once- patients with Parkinson's struggle to multitask (like walking and talking at the same time), it is recommended to perform every activity separately.

6. Think big - encourage your patient to perform big movements. For example, talk loudly, take big steps, and write big. Practicing with your patient can improve their performance.

7. Environmental accommodations to keep the surrounding safe and accessible. Here are a few recommendations to encourage function and prevent falls:

- remove all obstacles from the house/floor (i.e. cables, rugs, laundry)
- use a nightlight
- use a sturdy chair in the shower
- install railings in the shower and by the toilet
- Walk with closed shoes, NOT flip flops or sandals
- Place all necessary equipment next to the patient

8. In a case when a patient is frozen in the middle of walking- encourage him/her to stop, breathe, and start over

Where can I learn more about Parkinson's disease? Who can I contact if I have further questions?

Remember that you are not alone! If you are struggling to care for your patient, please consult the family, friends and medical professionals to alleviate the burden of caring for the patient.

Please watch this movie to learn about ways to help your patient-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qo7kXKgo2AE&t=299s>

OR-



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