About Parkinson's Disease

What is Parkinson's disease?

Parkinson's is a progressive neurological disease that results from the gradual loss of brain cells that produce dopamine, a chemical that sends messages to the part of the brain that controls movement and coordination. As Parkinson's progresses, dopamine in the brain decreases, leaving a person unable to control movement normally.

What are the symptoms of Parkinson's?

The key motor symptoms of Parkinson's are tremor, slowness of movement (bradykinesia), muscular rigidity or stiffness and postural instability (impaired balance and coordination).

Other symptoms may include pain, dementia or confusion, fatigue, sleep disturbances, depression, constipation, cognitive changes, fear or anxiety and urinary problems.

These symptoms can vary from person to person.

How many people have Parkinson's?

- As many as one million Americans and an estimated seven to 10 million people worldwide live with Parkinson's disease
- 60,000 people in the US are diagnosed every year
- The average age of onset is 60
- Approximately four percent of individuals are diagnosed before age 50

Can Parkinson's be cured?

The answer is no — not yet. However, researchers are making advances in understanding the disease, its causes and how to best treat it.

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