



## TEN NUTRITION TIPS FOR LIVING WELL WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE

BY: **KATHRYNNE HOLDEN, MS, RD**

**1) VITAMIN D** - Studies have shown widespread deficiency of vitamin D among people with PD; whether it contributes to the development of PD, or is a result of PD, is not yet known. But deficiency is associated with falls and fractures, diabetes, cancers and autoimmune diseases. You may want to ask your doctor to check your Vitamin D level, and take supplements as needed.

**2) FLAX SEED, GROUND** - Very high in two kinds of fiber: one helps control blood sugar; the other keeps the stool soft and bulky, which relieves constipation.



**3) GINGER** - Helps with the nausea that often occurs when starting PD medications; also helps speed stomach emptying.

**4) TURMERIC** - Contains a substance, curcumin, which has been recommended by some groups as useful in treatment of diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and liver damage; it is currently being investigated as a possible treatment for PD.

**5) BERRIES, CHERRIES** - PD is a stressful disease, and stress produces free radicals; antioxidants destroy free radicals. Cherries may be better free-radical scavengers than vitamin E. Blueberries may protect against dementia; cranberries are remarkably high in antioxidants and help protect against urinary tract infections. Blackberries, raspberries, strawberries – all are rich sources of powerful and protective phytonutrients.



**6) HONEY** - People with PD often develop a “sweet tooth.” If so, choose honey over sugar every day. Sugar has no nutritional value, whereas honey contains as many antioxidants as some fruits, along with trace minerals. It's even used in wound healing.



**7) BEANS** - Dried beans of all kinds are not only rich in protein; they are among the foods with the very highest sources of fiber, helping to prevent constipation, which frequently occurs in people with PD. Besides this, they contain B vitamins and magnesium, important to the nervous system.

**8) FISH** - Did you know that 20% of the gray matter of the brain is composed of DHA, found in fatty fish? Especially fatty fish like salmon, sardines, herring, anchovies and halibut. They contain the omega-3 fatty acids EPA & DHA, which protect against dementia and depression.



**9) TEA** - Black, green, white and oolong teas contain substances called “polyphenols” and people who drink more tea seem to be diagnosed less with Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. There are studies underway that are aimed at demonstrating improvement in PD symptoms.

**10) NUTS** - Rich in all the forms of vitamin E, as well as fiber – good enough reasons by themselves to eat nuts. Several studies have indicated the possibility that foods high in vitamin E (but not supplements) seem to protect against the development of PD. Nuts are a storehouse of hard-to-find trace minerals like selenium, which work together with vitamin E as an antioxidant. ■



Kathrynne Holden is a nutritionist who specializes in the science of nutrition for PD. She moderates the online forum “Ask about Nutrition” on the NPF web site at [www.parkinson.org](http://www.parkinson.org). Click on “Discussion Forums.”

Her books provide practical answers to PD-related concerns such as levodopa and protein, constipation, swallowing difficulty and bone loss. They contain suggestions for foods, along with sample recipes and menus focused on these special needs. Visit her web site at: [www.nutritionucanlivewith.com](http://www.nutritionucanlivewith.com).