

Many people with Parkinson's disease notice changes in their handwriting. Handwriting often becomes small and cramped, and can become more difficult to control when writing for longer periods of time. This handwriting change is called **micrographia**.

Why does micrographia occur?

Parkinson's can cause slowing of movement and feelings of muscle stiffness in the hands and fingers. Loss of automatic motion also affects the easy, flowing motion of handwriting. This can impact even simple writing tasks such as signing your name or writing a shopping list. Attempts to write quickly without thinking about forming each letter contributes to small, cramped handwriting, and may cause the hand to develop a feeling of tightness.

How can I make writing easier?

- Make a deliberate effort to form each letter. This can be hard to do at first, but is very effective in improving size and legibility of handwriting.
- Use a pen grip (round or triangular shaped rubber or foam cylinders available at stationery stores or where writing materials are found) or a larger size pen to keep your hand more relaxed.
- Try printing rather than writing in a cursive style. Printing causes you to pause briefly between each letter, keeping writing more legible.
- Using lined paper may provide a "visual target" to keep all letters big when writing.
- A ballpoint pen typically works better than felt tip or "rolling writer" styles.
- Rest your hand if it begins to feel "tight". Pause briefly when you see your handwriting becoming smaller.
- Avoid hurrying or trying to write long passages if you are feeling stressed.
- Practice helps. Remind yourself to slow down, aim big, and pause often!

Involving Your Team:

An occupational therapist can provide assessment and individual recommendations for improvement of your handwriting.