TIP SHEET

The Importance of Exercise and Activity FOR PEOPLE WITH PARKINSON'S

Staying active is important for people with Parkinson's disease. Regular exercise can help combat muscle stiffness, posture changes and weakness, as well as balance, walking and other mobility changes. Physical activity can also help manage constipation, which is commonly seen in people with Parkinson's.

You can encourage regular exercise and activity in the following ways:

» **Help your loved one establish a regular exercise routine.** Offer to join the person with Parkinson's for a walk, bike ride or visit to the local health club.

» **Allow the person with Parkinson's to be as independent as possible.** Understand that certain tasks may now take longer to perform.

» **Provide help when needed.** Parkinson's can cause fluctuations throughout the day, so your loved one may need more help at some times of day and less help at other times.

» **Loss of automatic movements can make the person with Parkinson's less inclined to move around, so remind your loved one to change position at least every hour during the day.** People with Parkinson's should avoid long periods of time sitting to read, watch TV or use the computer. Suggest listening to an audiobook while walking around or try watching TV from a treadmill.

» **Encourage your loved one to pursue hobbies and activities.** Parkinson’s disease can cause apathy or loss of motivation, and changes in motor control can make activities your loved one enjoyed in the past more difficult, so he or she may be less likely to participate without encouragement from others.

» **Seek a referral to a physical therapist,** who can provide individual evaluation, recommend an exercise program and help with follow-through.

For other tip sheets and caregiver support information, order the NPF book Caring and Coping.