Dressing

Advancing Parkinson’s can make daily tasks more difficult to perform. Getting dressed becomes a slower, more challenging activity, and caregivers often need to provide assistance. Changes to clothing and the dressing routine can improve safety and reduce frustration.

**General Tips**

» **Ensure adequate time for dressing.** Stress can make PD symptoms worse, so your loved one may not be able to help as much if you are rushing.

» **Consider waiting for a time to dress** when your loved one’s PD medications are working well, and he or she has the best mobility possible.

» **Assemble all necessary clothing items before beginning** to dress to eliminate multiple trips to the closet or dresser.

» **Allow the person with Parkinson’s to provide as much assistance as he or she can.**

» **Offer choice** (red sweater or blue sweater?) and encourage participation in physical movement.

» **Incorporate a few extra arm or leg motions** for the person with Parkinson’s during dressing to keep muscles flexible. This also builds range of motion and flexibility exercise into the daily routine.
Staying Safe While Dressing

» Have the person with Parkinson’s sit down while dressing to reduce the risk of balance loss or falls.

» To reduce back strain, make sure you have the best positioning possible when helping the person with Parkinson’s get dressed. For example, you can put on his or her pants, socks and shoes while the person is still lying down.

What to Wear?

» Choose clothing styles and fabrics that make dressing easier.

» Select clothes that are easy to put on.
  - Soft, stretchy fabrics are better if stiffness and rigidity are a problem.
  - Elastic waistbands, front openings and bras that hook in front are good choices.
  - Tube socks may be easier to put on than dress socks.

» Avoid velour and similar fabrics, which can create more friction with other surfaces and make it difficult to dress or move during the day.

» If one arm or leg has more stiffness, put this extremity into the sleeve or pant leg first.

» Velcro can be sewn into existing clothes (replace buttons with Velcro closures). Or you can buy clothing designed for easier dressing from adaptive clothing catalogs.

» Shoes with Velcro closures can also make dressing easier.

COLD WEATHER CLIMATES

» Choose outerwear that is oversized and easy fitting.

» A soft fabric coat or sweatshirt may be easier to put on, or consider an overhead poncho-style coat that does not require fitting arms into sleeves.

» Mittens are easier to put on than individual finger gloves.