Parkinson's in the Hospital:
Know the Risks & Take Action

Parkinson's Foundation

Being in the hospital can be challenging. For someone with Parkinson's disease (PD), there are extra risks. Each year, about 1 in 6 people with Parkinson's go to the emergency room or are admitted to the hospital. Many of these stays involve problems that could be prevented. Planning ahead and speaking up about your needs can help reduce these risks.

What can affect your Parkinson's care in the hospital?
Hospitals treat many conditions, but not all staff are trained in Parkinson's care. This can affect your treatment. Here are some problems you may encounter:



Your hospital medications may not match what you take at home
Hospital orders may not include the correct medications, doses or timing. This can lead to missed or incorrect doses.



Medications may not be given on time
Even when ordered correctly, medications can be delayed or missed if exact timing is not understood or staff are busy. This can worsen symptoms.



You may be given medications that are not safe with Parkinson's
Some medications used in the hospital (for nausea, sleep or confusion) can worsen movement or cause confusion or hallucinations.



You may move less than usual
People often move less in the hospital or need help moving safely. Less movement can quickly lead to stiffness and weakness for people with PD.



Swallowing problems may not be recognized right away
Parkinson's can affect swallowing. Changes in swallowing can make eating, drinking and taking medications more difficult and less safe.

These problems can build on each other. For example, less movement can lead to weakness, increase fall risk and make it harder to return to your usual routine.

How can you help reduce these risks?

The Hospital Safety Guide is a free resource to help you prepare for a hospital stay, share your needs and speak up about your care. It includes the **Five Parkinson's Care Needs** below to help you communicate clearly with your hospital team.

My Five Parkinson's Care Needs

Need 1: I need my medication list and schedule to be correct in my chart.

- Share your up-to-date list of medications, doses and timing. Having your medications from home in the original bottles can help prevent delays or errors.

Need 2: I need my medications on time.

- Tell staff that medications should be given within 15 minutes of your usual schedule.

Need 3: I need to avoid medications that worsen Parkinson's.

- Ask to review medications before they are given to you.

Need 4: I need to move regularly.

- Work with staff on ways to keep moving safely throughout the day.

Need 5: I need support with swallowing.

- Ask for a swallowing assessment and safe medication, fluid and nutrition options.

How can the Hospital Safety Guide help me?

Use the Hospital Safety Guide to:

- Track medications and care details
- Share your needs clearly with the hospital team
- Check medications before they are given
- Involve a care partner or support person

Order your guide at **Parkinson.org/HospitalSafety** and bring it with you to the hospital.

Where can I find more help?

- Call the Parkinson's Foundation Helpline at 1-800-4PD-INFO (1-800-473-4636) or email Helpline@Parkinson.org.

You are an important member of your Parkinson's care team. Learn more about making the most of your care at **Parkinson.org/OptimizingCare**.