

Veterans and Parkinson's



The Parkinson's Foundation and the VA have partnered to improve the health, well-being and quality of life for veterans living with Parkinson's.

10 Early Signs

Parkinson's affects everyone differently, but these early signs may signal it is time to talk to your doctor:

1. Tremor
2. Small handwriting
3. Loss of smell
4. Trouble sleeping
5. Trouble moving or walking
6. Constipation
7. Soft or low voice
8. Masked face
9. Dizziness or fainting
10. Stooping

More than 110,000 veterans with Parkinson's disease (PD) receive care through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Parkinson's Foundation is here to help veterans and their loved ones live well with PD. To find resources tailored to the veteran community, visit [Parkinson.org/Veterans](https://www.parkinsons.org/veterans) or call the Parkinson's Foundation Helpline at **1-800-4PD-INFO (1-800-473-4636)**.

What is Parkinson's disease?

Parkinson's disease is a progressive, neurological disorder that occurs when the cells in the brain that make dopamine start to die. The rate of progression and symptoms are different for everyone. Movement symptoms can include tremors, slowness of movement, stiffness and problems with balance. Non-movement symptoms can include fatigue, depression, anxiety and problems with sleep.

There are nearly one million people in the U.S. living with PD and an additional 90,000 people are newly diagnosed each year. There is no cure for Parkinson's, but treatment can improve quality of life. Treatment options include medication, exercise, rehabilitation therapies (physical, occupational and speech therapies), surgical options and a healthy diet.

Medical Care and Treatment

Many U.S. veterans with Parkinson's can access specialized medical care and financial assistance through the VA. The VA provides Parkinson's treatment at Parkinson's Disease Research, Education & Clinical Centers (PADRECCs) and their Associated Sites. To learn more, visit www.parkinsons.va.gov or call 1-800-949-1001 x205769. To apply for VA healthcare, visit www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply or call 1-877-222-8387.

Agent Orange and Toxic Exposures

In some cases, developing Parkinson's can be associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service. Agent Orange was a powerful herbicide used in Vietnam from 1962 to 1975, but was also used and stored in other locations. Veterans may be eligible for a free environmental health registry evaluation, disability compensation and other VA benefits. To learn more, visit [Parkinson.org/Veterans](https://www.parkinsons.org/veterans) or call the Veteran Benefits Administration at 1-800-827-1000.

Resources

The Veterans Guide offers key Parkinson's information and resources for veterans and their care partners.

Download the free guide at [Parkinson.org/VeteransGuide](https://www.parkinson.org/VeteransGuide).

Your local Parkinson's Foundation Chapter can help you find nearby programs, support groups and resources.

Find your local Chapter at [Parkinson.org/InYourArea](https://www.parkinson.org/InYourArea).

Learn more about veterans and PD. Visit [Parkinson.org/Veterans](https://www.parkinson.org/Veterans).

Helpline

For answers to your Parkinson's questions, contact our Helpline at **1-800-473-4636** or Helpline@Parkinson.org.

We are here for you.

Veterans Benefits

Veterans living with Parkinson's may qualify for financial benefit programs to help cope with financial challenges. Service members, veterans and families can apply for various VA benefits by:

- ✓ Applying online at www.eBenefits.va.gov.
- ✓ Working with an accredited representative or VSO. Federal law prohibits attorneys and others from charging a fee to assist with the VA application.
- ✓ Calling the VA's toll-free hotline at 1-800-827-1000, Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET.

Caring for a Veteran with Parkinson's

The care partner experience is unique to every individual. The Parkinson's Foundation and VA have resources specially designed for those caring for a veteran with Parkinson's. Regardless of whether you are early in the journey, caring from afar or supporting a loved one in the advanced stages of Parkinson's, we have the resources to help. Learn more at [Parkinson.org/Veterans](https://www.parkinson.org/Veterans).

Hospital Safety

Every person living with Parkinson's should be prepared for a possible hospitalization including veterans and their care partners. Visit [Parkinson.org/HospitalSafety](https://www.parkinson.org/HospitalSafety) to learn more and order or download your free Hospital Safety Guide.

Mental Health

Mental health concerns like depression and anxiety are common in people with PD. They can be the result of living with a chronic condition, but they can also be a symptom of the disease itself and changes in the brain. Be aware of these symptoms and do not hesitate to talk to your doctor. Keep the **Veterans Crisis Line** number nearby, just in case: dial **988**, then press 1 or text 838255.



You are not alone.

Whether you are newly diagnosed or have been living with Parkinson's for many years, the Parkinson's Foundation can help you find the resources that work best for you.

- Explore [Parkinson.org/Resources](https://www.parkinson.org/Resources).
- Join our virtual community at [PDConversations.org](https://www.parkinson.org/PDConversations.org).
- Call our Helpline at **1-800-4PD-INFO (1-800-473-4636)** for answers to your Parkinson's questions.