

MEALTIME AIDS

Thanks to many attractive and durable meal time aids on the market today, people with Parkinson's can eat with greater independence, despite tremor, rigidity or impaired fine hand coordination.

Tips and suggestions:

- Attachable plate guards provide a rim on one side of the plate. Food, such as small vegetables, can be pushed against the guard, where it falls onto the fork. "Scoop Dishes" contoured with raised edges, plates with suction cups and plate guards all help prevent spills and are readily available.
- If eating is slow, use a plate with a hot water container attached to the underside to help keep food warm.
- Silverware with built-up plastic handles is easy to grasp.
- Use a soup spoon instead of a fork for small pieces of food.
- Flexible plastic straws can reduce spills when tremor exists.
- A light-weight mug with a large handle for easy grasping is useful when tremor is severe.

APDA National Young Onset Center
Glenbrook Hospital
2100 Pflingsten Road
Glenview, IL 60026

APDA West Coast Office
10850 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 730
Los Angeles, CA 90024

"TO EASE THE BURDEN . . ."

Prepared by the American Parkinson Disease Association, Inc. this pamphlet provides thirty four proven ways to simplify life's daily challenges for people with Parkinson's. Its purpose is to help these individuals maintain the greatest degree of personal dignity and independence.

AMERICAN PARKINSON DISEASE ASSOCIATION, INC.

The American Parkinson Disease Association, Inc. (APDA) is the largest grassroots organization serving patients with Parkinson's disease. Since its founding in 1961, APDA has maintained its commitment "To Ease the Burden, To Find the Cure" for Parkinson's disease.

APDA provides extensive educational information through the distribution of manuals, publications, video tapes, DVD's and newsletters. All of the organization's services are free to the public and are funded entirely by voluntary contributions from concerned individuals. Through its research efforts and patient services, APDA not only enhances the quality of life for those with Parkinson disease, but promotes research toward finding a cure.

Further information is available by phone at
1-800-223-2732
or by using our website
www.apdaparkinson.org



34

HELPFUL HINTS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF PEOPLE WITH PARKINSON'S

© Feb. 2008
American Parkinson Disease Association, Inc.
Parkinson Plaza
135 Parkinson Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10305
(718)981-8001
(800)223-2732
Fax (718)981-4399
E-Mail: apda@apdaparkinson.org
Website: www.apdaparkinson.org

BATHROOM & GROOMING AIDS

Safety is a particular concern in the bathroom due to its potential hazards for anyone suffering from impaired balance, difficulty in walking, tremors, slowed reactions, and/or inability to call loudly for help. Most bathrooms are small and have surfaces that are slippery when wet.

Tips and suggestions:

- Use a tub bench or shower chair to bathe safely.
- Place a non-slip rubber mat or adhesive antislip strips at the bottom of tub or shower.
- Have grab bars installed instead of using weak bathroom fixtures as grab railings for support.
- Replace as many slippery bathroom surfaces as possible.
- Use “Soap on a Rope” to keep soap safely and conveniently within reach while showering or taking a tub bath.
- Attach suction cups to a nail brush and a soap dish. These items can then be affixed securely to the inside of the tub, shower or sink for easy access.
- Use a sponge attached to a long handle - or a soft long-handled bath brush - to reach the lower legs, feet and back & facilitate balance by reducing the need to bend.
- Use a terry cloth wash mitt instead of a washcloth.
- Use an electric razor especially for those who suffer from tremors. A variety of electric razor holders are on the market which can make grasping the razor easier.
- Install a night light in a wall socket.



DRESSING AIDS

The fine hand coordination and strength needed for buttoning and zipping clothing fasteners is sometimes impaired in people with Parkinson's. Nevertheless, most patients feel more comfortable dressing themselves, even though it may take longer to do so. They can compensate for their loss of fine motor skills by simplifying clothing fasteners in a variety of ways.

Tips and suggestions:

- Lower clothes rods in closets so you don't have to reach too high.
- Choose clothing that closes in the front, with easy style and uncomplicated fastenings.
- Put on and take off clothes from your stiffer side first, and have a family member lay out the clothing.
- Use velcro closures as substitute for buttons and zippers. Remove the button and sew velcro in place under the button hole and over the button area. Then sew the button on top of the button hole where it would normally appear. Remove zippers and sew Velcro strips in place.
- Use a button hook or a “Button Aid”. The handles of these tools are more easily grasped than a small button when fine hand coordination is impaired.
- Large, easily grasped zipper pulls make opening or closing trouser flies, jackets and coats less difficult.
- Secure shirt cuffs with firm elastic bands. This method eliminates buttoning and the result is unnoticeable. (Be sure the bands are not tight enough to restrict circulation.)
- Pull trousers and underclothing over feet and legs with a “Dressing Stick”. It allows one to remain seated while dressing and reduces the risk of falling.
- Elastic shoe laces need be tied only once, easily converting Oxford shoes to slip-ons. Or, have a shoemaker stitch Velcro strips onto standard tie shoes.

KITCHEN AIDS

The kitchen is the center of many activities of daily living. With a little advanced planning and organization, meal preparation can be made safer, easier and more enjoyable by limiting the amount of reaching and walking to be done.

Tips and suggestions:

- Store items and food preparation implements near the dishwasher and sink, pots near the stove, etc.
- Try preparing food while you are seated. Also try cooking as much food as possible during “on” times and then freeze the meals for when you don't feel up to cooking.
- Use a cart with wheels to move items from room to room or from the kitchen to the table, to eliminate the necessity of carrying additional items and to offer support while walking.
- Place a “Lazy Susan” in the center of the kitchen table or on a counter, to hold numerous frequently-used items and eliminate the need to collect these items before meals.
- Use a rubber pad or a wet dishcloth under bowls and pans to stabilize them while preparing foods.
- Use a cutting board with raised sides. It will prevent diced vegetables and small pieces of meat from falling off the board. Hammer a nail through the cutting board to act as a skewer to keep food from slipping while dicing or cutting.
- Cut your food with a “Rocking Knife”, which does not require as much coordination as a straight knife.
- Try using a “Crock Pot” to avoid the bending and lifting necessary in using an oven. (Crock Pots are also inexpensive and energy-efficient.)
- Attach an old broom handle or a long wooden dowel to the kitchen dustpan to collect floor sweepings without bending.