

## Healthy Today, Happy Tomorrow: Staying Strong with Parkinson's Disease

A Parkinson's disease (PD) diagnosis often comes with a unique set of challenges — but by getting active, eating better, and making mental health a priority, people facing PD can improve their overall health.



### Exercise

Getting outside and exercising is a great way for people affected by PD to stay fit and healthy. It helps to improve motor performance, endurance, and strength, and it even has the added benefit of improving cardiovascular health.

This summer, why not consider taking up a new activity like tai chi or yoga? The American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) offers a wealth of virtual exercise and movement classes for people with PD of all abilities, no matter where you live. The classes are all free, and you can find a full listing at [apdaparkinson.org/events](https://apdaparkinson.org/events). It's a great way to get active in a safe, supportive environment — and to have fun with other members of the PD community!

### Nutrition

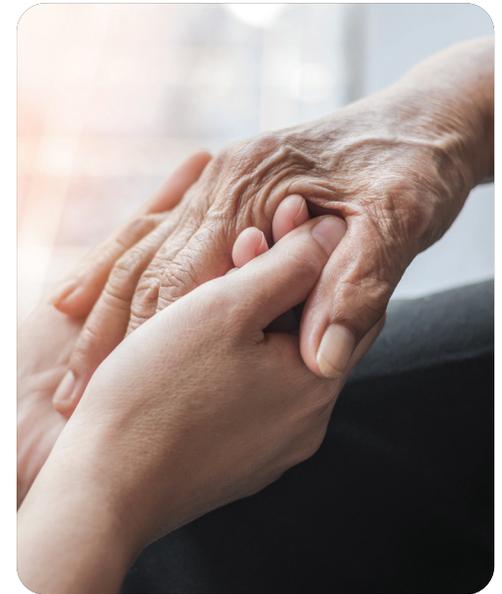
Habits at the dinner table are equally important for overall health. While there's no one-size-fits-all healthy diet that works for everyone, there are some things that anyone can do to improve their health.

For example, the Mediterranean diet may be worth adopting. Rich in healthy oils and low-fat proteins, it has shown to be associated with reduced rates of cancer and cardiovascular disease — as well as PD. In fact, one recent study suggests that the adoption of the Mediterranean diet prior to a PD diagnosis may be associated with a delay in the onset of symptoms.

To support brain health, consider adding more of these foods to your diet:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Berries
- Whole grains
- Nuts
- Seeds

To learn more about what foods are right for you, visit [apdaparkinson.org/blog](https://apdaparkinson.org/blog) and search the keyword “nutrition.”



### Mental Health

And of course, mental health is a crucial part of overall health. People affected by PD are in a unique situation — and finding a network of support and community can make an incredible impact. Through our nationwide system of APDA Chapters and I&R Centers, we offer support groups, educational programs, and other opportunities to connect and commiserate so that anyone affected by PD can find understanding and information — perhaps new friendships as well.

Thanks to the incredible support of people like you — during the summertime and year-round — people facing PD can find the resources and support they need with APDA. Find what you need today at [apdaparkinson.org/community](https://apdaparkinson.org/community).

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO & PRESIDENT

Dear Friend,

As you may already know, this year marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary for APDA. That means 60 years of progress — and sharing strength, hope, and optimism to help people with PD and their loved ones. And all of it has been made possible by you.



While this landmark year has certainly been one of change, challenges, and uncertainty, our support for the PD community has not wavered. In fact, as we look to the future, I am inspired by the knowledge that we have overcome so much already, and I'm invigorated to keep pushing that much harder for all people facing PD in the years to come.

As you read this issue of **APDA Insights**, please know that it's your friendship that drives progress forward. With you by our side, I'm sure that a brighter future is possible for the PD community.

With sincerest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leslie A. Chambers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leslie A. Chambers  
President & CEO  
American Parkinson Disease Association

## SUMMER VACATION: TAKING YOUR PD ON THE ROAD

Ready for a getaway? Whether you're venturing near or far, if you have PD or are traveling with someone who does, make sure you're prepared. As more people get vaccinated against COVID-19, we will see travel restrictions ease up. Even still, it's important to continue practicing good habits — such as washing your hands and wearing a mask where one is required. No matter your vacation destination, take it slow and enjoy yourself with these helpful tips:



### Plan ahead.

Common vacation stressors can be avoided by planning early — this is especially true for people affected by PD. When traveling by plane or train, be sure to keep medicine, contact information for your healthcare team, and even a cane in your carry-on bag or backpack. Checked luggage can get lost, and no one wants to be separated from their essentials in an unfamiliar place.

For longer trips, ask your doctor about locating medical professionals in the area in case of emergencies or to keep up with your care routine.

### Take care of yourself.

Eating right, exercising, keeping up with medication — people living with PD should always plan to stick to important routines that are critical to overall health, even while traveling. If you're able, try to get up and move around on a long flight. If you're on a long drive, try to do even some simple stretches at every pit stop.

Taking medication at the same time each day is critical. Set a calendar reminder on your mobile device or let your travel companions in on your medication schedule so they can help keep you on track. And of course, it never hurts to connect with your doctor before you leave to see if they have any tips on how to best manage your specific needs while traveling.

### Know your limits.

Since many of us haven't traveled in some time, consider starting out with shorter trips that are closer to home so you can adjust to the challenges associated with travel. For people with PD, staying hydrated and resting when necessary are also incredibly important. Plan to be flexible with your vacation itinerary and consider bringing extra water along — especially if you'll be outside for extended periods of time.

A little extra planning before heading off on a summer vacation can make a world of difference. Make the most of your trip and live life to the fullest no matter where you spend the summer months — but don't forget to take care of yourself!

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT APDA?



## Around Your Neighborhood and Across the Nation: APDA's Spring Virtual Optimism Walk!

The Virginia, Massachusetts, and Northwest Spring Optimism Walks kicked off on May 22! Participants joined together for an inspiring virtual Opening Ceremony and then headed out to walk safely in their own neighborhoods, sharing photos and messages on social media to stay connected and keep the fun going. Check out #OptimismWalk on social media to see how walkers celebrated — and visit [apdaparkinson.org/optimism-walks](https://apdaparkinson.org/optimism-walks) to register for upcoming Walks and to learn more.



## Dr. Gilbert Hosts: Genetics and PD With Dr. Clemens Scherzer

Genetic mutations, genetic testing, genetic research — it's fascinating stuff! Dr. Clemens Scherzer recently sat down with Dr. Rebecca Gilbert for an episode of *Dr. Gilbert Hosts* to discuss genetics and PD — but don't worry if you missed it! You can watch it (and all past episodes of *Dr. Gilbert*

*Hosts*) in our Educational Video Library at [apdaparkinson.org/videos](https://apdaparkinson.org/videos).

# NEW AND IMPROVED — THE APDA SYMPTOM TRACKER

Each person's PD symptoms are as unique as the person living with it. That's why APDA has launched our new and improved app to help track PD symptoms.

Now also available in Spanish, the **APDA Symptom Tracker** helps users track symptoms (like tremors, balance issues, and more) and medications. You can also create useful reports to save and share with your healthcare team — because the more you can share about your specific symptoms, the more personalized care your doctors can provide.

Download the **APDA Symptom Tracker** today, available for free on the Apple App Store and Google Play. Or visit [apdaparkinson.org/apda-symptom-tracker](https://apdaparkinson.org/apda-symptom-tracker) to learn more.



# CREATING A LEGACY

If you wish to leave a legacy that will touch the lives of so many, please consider including APDA in your planned giving (i.e., your will). There are several easy ways to make an impactful gift that will not only help in the fight against PD but could help you, your estate, and your heirs. Giving through a will or trust, life insurance policies, a charitable gift annuity, and excess retirement funds are just several options.

To learn more about planned giving and which options are right for you, contact your financial advisor, or reach out to APDA's Office of Planned Giving at [apda@apdaparkinson.org](mailto:apda@apdaparkinson.org) or **718-981-9202**. You can also visit our website at [apdaparkinson.org/legacy](https://apdaparkinson.org/legacy) for more info.





# “ASK THE DOCTOR”

with Dr. Rebecca Gilbert



**Q. My husband experiences big differences in the time it takes for a dose of carbidopa/levodopa to work. It may take anywhere from 20 minutes to 2.5 hours! That makes it very difficult to know when to take the medication when we are going out.**

**A.** This problem can be so frustrating. The unpredictable ONs and OFFs that your husband is experiencing can be due to many things, including (1) unpredictable gastric motility — it could be that the pills get “hung up” in the stomach because the gut is not moving properly, or (2) other GI pathology which may interfere with levodopa absorption. I would talk to your neurologist about this issue and perhaps ask for a consult with a

gastroenterologist to see if there is anything that can be done to help with more predictable levodopa absorption. If your doctors can’t pinpoint a reason for the erratic nature of your husband’s responses to medications, then speak with the neurologist about potentially adding an as-needed medication to his regimen that he can take if his regular dose is not effective.

**Q. I have PD, and when I have no stress, I can walk. But if I am under stress, my feet stick to the ground when I try to walk. What can I do?**

**A.** You are describing a clinical phenomenon known as *freezing of gait*, in which a person tends to take multiple stutter-steps in place before

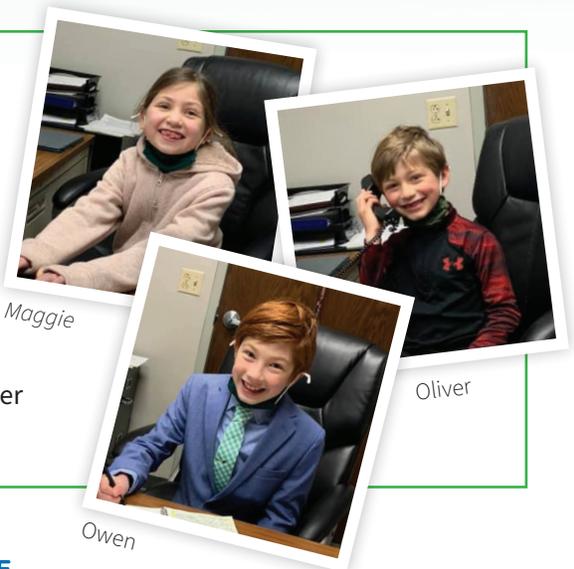
being able to move their stride forward. There are various potential causes for this, and you should speak to your doctor because adjusting your PD medications might make a difference. There are also quite a few tips and tricks to help you get “unstuck.” For example, try another movement — raise an arm, touch your head, point to the ceiling, and then restart — or change direction. If you can’t move forward, try stepping sideways first, and then go forward. For a more in-depth look at freezing of gait and more tips, please visit [apdaparkinson.org](http://apdaparkinson.org).

*Dr. Rebecca Gilbert is the Chief Scientific Officer at APDA. She oversees APDA’s research portfolio in conjunction with APDA’s Scientific Advisory Board. She also provides medical and clinical expertise to support APDA programming as well as print and web content.*

## Kids Run the School and Raise Money for APDA!

At Saint John Neumann Catholic School in Illinois, siblings Owen, Maggie, and Oliver stepped in as “principals for a day” (thanks to an auction prize their parents won). Their first order of business? Raising money for APDA!

As acting principals, the three siblings coordinated a “dress-down” day, giving students the chance to wear casual clothes to school if they made a charitable donation. The kids chose to give to APDA in honor of a family member with PD. In the end, they raised \$876! Thank you, Owen, Maggie, and Oliver!



Maggie

Oliver

Owen



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apda@apdaparkinson.org | apdaparkinson.org

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**For more information or to learn about the many ways you can support APDA, please call (800) 223-2732 or visit [apdaparkinson.org/Renew](http://apdaparkinson.org/Renew).**