



AMERICAN PARKINSON DISEASE ASSOCIATION

ILLINOIS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

April/May/June 2025

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Living Your Personal Best



OPTIMISM WALK AMERICAN PARKINSON DISEASE ASSOCIATION

Chicagoland Optimism Walk Saturday, June 21, 2025

Check-In/Pre-Event Activities: 9:00 am
Ceremony, Awards & Warmups: 10:30 am
Walk Starts: 11:00 am

Join us for a 1/4 or 1/2 mile walk with family-friendly activities, fun incentive prizes, and more!

Naperville Riverwalk - Grand Pavillion
912 Honorary Sindt Ct. | Naperville, IL 60540



SCAN HERE to register





OPTIMISM WALK 2024



apda AMERICAN PARKINSON DISEASE ASSOCIATION ILLINOIS CHAPTER

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UNDERSTANDING THE GENETIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO PD

By Dr. Erin Foster, PhD, OTD, OTR/L

Understanding the genetic contributions to Parkinson disease (PD) is a high priority. It will allow scientists to develop better predictions of disease risk as well as targeted and effective treatments. Although PD can affect anyone, regardless of their race, ethnicity or ancestry, studies of the genetics of PD have primarily included people of European descent and/or those who identify as White. This lack of diversity has resulted in an incomplete picture of the risk, biology, and treatment of PD across populations and has limited the generalizability and impact of research findings. In particular, Black and African American people are largely underrepresented in PD research studies. In addition to limiting our understanding of the biological basis and clinical course of PD, this underrepresentation has contributed to considerable health inequities and disparities among Black and African American people with PD, including later diagnosis, lower access to specialized care, and worse health outcomes.

To address this problem, the Global Parkinson's Genetics Program (GP2), supported by the Aligning Science Across Parkinson's initiative and implemented by The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, launched the Black and African American Connections to Parkinson's Disease (BLAAC PD) study. BLAAC PD is a multi-site study in the United States that aims to create a cohort of 2,000 people of Black and/or African American ancestry (1,000 with PD and 1,000 without) to help researchers better understand the

genetics of PD. It has enrolled over 730 participants to-date. Critically, thanks in part to data contributed by the BLAAC PD study, a new genetic risk factor for PD has been discovered! By expanding PD research to involve underrepresented populations, we are already broadening our knowledge of the genetics of PD. Such information will benefit ALL people with PD by increasing our understanding of the risk and contributors to PD, bringing us closer to the creation of personalized and targeted treatments.

UChicago Duchossois Center for Advanced Medicine, Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, and Rush University Medical Center are sites for the BLAAC PD study and are actively recruiting adults with or without PD. Also, you do not need to identify as Black or African American to help! If you are interested in contributing to our effort improve health equity and reduce health disparities among people with PD by increasing diversity and representation in PD research, clinical care, and community services, please contact:

Dr. Erin Foster
at erfoster@wustl.edu!

St. Louis area:
NIL-BLAACPD@email.wustl.edu
Or Kandace Davis at [phone number](tel:3147724444)



TRAVELLING WITH PD

By Sydney Marshman, OTD, OTR/L, BCG



Whether you are a routine snowbird or traveling for an adventure, flying can be quite the task for someone with PD. Check out these tips below on ways to make your flying experience easier.

Booking Your Flight

Several flight search engines offer filter options to optimize your travel. Two filters that may be helpful as you're planning:

- **Arrival and Departure Times** Filter out flights during off times, such as early mornings or late into the evening. Avoiding off times may help you have an easier time getting through the airport.
- **Layover Length** Avoid rushing through the airport to make a connecting flight OR sitting too long in the airport. Filter flights with layovers that allow you enough time to find the restroom, get to the next gate, and maybe eat something too.

Once you've selected the ideal flight, move carefully from screen to screen. Eventually, you will be provided an option to enter "passenger assistance." This is where you can indicate for wheelchair assistance through security, or gate to gate transportation during a connection.

If you plan to rent a car during your trip, consider if the rental car agency is onsite or offsite. An onsite rental car agency allows for pickups at the airport and does not require an additional transfer. While this is not available at all airports, it can be helpful to know in advance. An offsite car rental agency will require a transfer from the airport to the rental agency. This is typically done by bus, and depending on the airport may be one bus to a centralized off-site area of individual rental care agency busses. To check if your agency is on site, simply search for the company's address online. This will show whether it is listed at the airport or at another location.

Packing

There are three types of luggage used while traveling. Depending on the airline, you may need to pay for different types of luggage.

- **Personal Item** - A backpack, purse, or other small bag that fits under the seat in front of you.
- **Carry On** - Generally a medium sized suitcase or duffle bag that is stored in the overhead bins on the plane.
- **Checked Bag** - This is a larger suitcase, or other item that will be stored in the cargo area of the plane.

It may be worthwhile to check your luggage to your final destination. This allows for easier movement through the airport with both hands free to navigate moving walkways and escalators.

All medications should be stored in your personal item, as this will never be separated from you. While carryon items are often stored in the overhead bin, there is a chance carryon luggage is gate checked or checked to your final destination if there is not ample overhead space. This particularly happens when traveling from a smaller airport to a connecting flight at a larger airport. Carrying your medications in your personal item can prevent any delays in medication schedule. It should also be noted your medication list should be readily available when you travel, whether it is available in print or digitally on a smart device.

Choosing the bags you travel with is just as important as how you pack them. Personal items should be easy to carry. Ideally, a personal item such as a purse or backpack is not heavy. A heavy backpack or over the shoulder bag could negatively affect your balance. Another important consideration is ease of access, a front wearing cross body bag can provide easy access to your ID, phone, and a place to store your boarding pass.

Luggage comes in all shapes, sizes, and wheel types. Luggage with 4 caster wheels can be easier to push and manage through a busy airport, in comparison with its two wheel counterpart. If you do plan to push luggage

through an airport, consider a personal item with a luggage strap. This allows it to easily slide over the handle of your luggage and prevents it from falling off.

Medical equipment such as walkers and wheelchairs can be gate checked at no charge. It's important to consider that any checked equipment has the potential to be damaged. Purchasing a cover for equipment can help protect it in the process. It may be necessary to find creative covers such as a golf club case for a device like a U step walker.

At the Airport

You'll need your ID and boarding pass handy throughout your time at the airport. A simple lanyard ID carrying case can help keep these items readily available for checking bags, security, and boarding the plane. If you don't plan to check a bag, you may consider using your smart phone to check in and access your boarding pass. This generally requires downloading the airline's app, with check in available 24 hours in advance. After checking in, your boarding pass is loaded onto your phone and scannable at the gate when boarding the plane. Another great feature of airline apps on your smart phone is they often have airport maps and can help identify time between gates and accessible routes.

Passing through security can be a daunting task for anyone, particularly as you are feeling rushed to move through the line. TSA provides Passenger Support Services which can help individuals move through security. This is separate from wheelchair assistance provided by each airline. While this service does not exempt you from screening, it can be helpful to move through security with additional assistance. Passenger Support Services need to be scheduled 72 hours in advance and can be done so on by completing the TSA Cares form or calling **TSA Cares at (855) 787-2227**.

Other considerations may be purchasing slip on shoes that are easy to put on and take off, like Sketchers or Kiziks. Another option is investigating if you qualify for TSA Pre-Check. In advance of your trip, you would schedule an appointment at a TSA Pre-Check office

with approved documents. The cost is \$95 and may be reimbursable if you have a travel credit card. If you are TSA Pre-Check it is often a shorter line at airport security, and you do not need to remove your shoes. Keep in mind if you are traveling with another, you would both need to be approved to move through the PreCheck line.

Don't Forget Your Gym Bag

Traveling is a significant test to your physical fitness and endurance. Just like you would carefully plan an itinerary, consider preparing your body for this adventure! If you have upcoming travel via plane or car, consider touching base with your physical therapist, occupational therapist, and personal trainer.





**Thursday, May 15
Glenview, Illinois**

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PARKINSON DISEASE
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ILLINOIS CHAPTER
Strength in optimism. Hope in progress.

Sleeping and Living Well with Parkinson Disease

AN APDA PARKINSON'S EDUCATION PROGRAM

*In partnership with the
Glenview Senior Center*

Where: Glenview Park District
East Wing Glenview Senior Center
Lakeview Room
2400 Chestnut Ave., Glenview, IL

When: 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM



Discover ways to improve sleep quality



Manage disruptions caused by aging and Parkinson's related sleep issues



Gain practical advice on how to safely get out of bed, reducing the risk of falls after sleep

Speaker Highlight

- » Dr. Roneil Malkani, MD, MS
- » Austin Pohlman, Neuro Exercise Specialist



Phone: 708-329-9527

Email: apdail@apdaparkinson.org

**SPACE IS LIMITED,
REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

"A-ROUND" PARKINSON DISEASE

Education and Round Table Discussions for People Living with Parkinson Disease and their Care Partners

Tuesday, April 29, 2025

- When: 2:00 - 4:30 pm
- Where: The Presbyterian Church
 - 13401 Wolf Rd., Orland Park, IL 60467

Sponsored by:  Supernus[®]
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Friday, May 16, 2025

- When: 2:00 - 4:30 pm
- Where: Prisco Community Center (Fox Valley Park District)
 - 150 West Illinois Ave., Aurora, IL 60506

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Our first grandchild is one active little guy. The American Parkinson Disease Association has what I need for me to be my best self so that I can stay **strong and keep up with my grandson.**

MISCHELLE
Parkinson's Grandmother
Diagnosed at age 57

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NUTRITION STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT PARKINSON'S SYMPTOMS

Parkinson's disease (PD) affects movement, coordination, and quality of life. While there is no cure, nutrition plays a key role in managing symptoms, improving well-being, and supporting brain health. A well-balanced diet can help optimize medication effectiveness, maintain energy levels, and reduce complications. Here are key nutrition strategies for individuals with Parkinson's.

1. Eat a Balanced Diet

Focus on nutrient-dense foods:



- **Fruits and Vegetables** – Rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals to combat oxidative stress.
- **Whole Grains** – Provide fiber for digestive health and sustained energy.
- **Lean Proteins** – Poultry, fish, tofu, beans, and lentils maintain muscle strength.
- **Healthy Fats** – Omega-3s in salmon, flaxseeds, and walnuts support brain function.

2. Manage Protein Timing for Medication

Levodopa, a primary PD medication, can be affected by protein intake.

To improve absorption:



- Space protein intake throughout the day.
- Take levodopa 30-60 minutes before meals.

3. Stay Hydrated & Maintain Electrolytes

Dehydration can worsen symptoms like dizziness and constipation.

Stay hydrated by:



- Drinking 6-8 glasses of water daily.
- Eating hydrating foods like cucumbers and watermelon.
- Consuming electrolyte-rich foods like bananas and leafy greens.

4. Support Gut Health

Digestive issues like constipation are common in PD. Improve gut health by:



- Eating 25-30g of fiber daily from fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Consuming probiotic foods like yogurt and kefir.
- Staying active to promote digestion.

5. Reduce Inflammation and Support Brain Health

Chronic inflammation is linked to neurodegeneration.

Anti-inflammatory foods include:



- **Turmeric & Ginger** – May reduce inflammation and support brain function.
- **Green Tea** – Contains polyphenols with neuroprotective effects.
- **Berries** – Provide antioxidants that support cognitive health.



6. Maintain Bone & Muscle Strength



People with PD are at increased risk of falls and fractures. Key nutrients include:

- **Calcium** – Found in dairy, fortified plant milks, and leafy greens.
- **Vitamin D** – Obtained from sunlight, fatty fish, and fortified foods.
- **Magnesium** – Supports muscle relaxation and nerve function.

7. Manage Weight & Energy



Weight changes are common in PD. Maintain a healthy weight by:

- Eating small, frequent meals if appetite is low.
- Choosing nutrient-dense foods like avocados and nut butters.
- Engaging in regular physical activity to preserve muscle mass.

Final Thoughts

A well-planned diet can improve quality of life for those with Parkinson's. Working with a healthcare professional or dietitian can help create a personalized nutrition plan. Small dietary changes can significantly impact symptom management and overall health.

Tips and Tricks for Parkinson's Mobility Edition

✓ **Routine:** Build physical activity into your daily routine and stay active, even when at home.

✓ **Public Spaces:** If going in public feels dangerous, bring a buddy to provide support and stay closer to walls or the outside edges of crowd.

✓ **Be Cautious:** Be mindful and go slow when moving around challenging spaces, especially on stairs. Holding onto railings or nearby assists can help you feel safer..

✓ **Adaptive Devices:** Consult your doctor or therapist about using a cane, walker, or wheelchair if needed. This equipment can assist with walking, balance, and freezing of gait.



LIVING YOUR PERSONAL BEST

by Valerie Stickel-Diehl, RN, MS, MSCN

Just Add Water: Dilution is the Solution!!!

Please check with your healthcare provider before you make changes in your fluid intake.

Hydration vs. Dehydration

When Parkinson's Disease changes your life, you can take steps to prevent complications and worsening of symptoms. Let's explore some strategies to help you become a well hydrated person. Prevention is better than intervention!

Understanding Dehydration - it may happen gradually, however, the complications can cause an URGENT need for medical intervention. It is a common reason elderly people go to the hospital. Here are the symptoms as well as the causes of dehydration.

Symptoms of Dehydration

- Confusion, sudden memory loss, headaches, dizzy, foggy
- Falling, balance issues, low blood pressure
- Fever due to urinary tract infection or aspiration pneumonia
- Constipation, and dark yellow urine, increase in need to urinate
- Excessive sleepiness, difficulty waking up
- Change in response to medications
- Sticky mouth, thick saliva, dry eyes

Causes of Dehydration

- Lack of thirst, fluid intake is less than needed to support organs
- Fever from infection, sweating and breathing
- Medications, over the counter and prescriptions
- Alcohol, Caffeine

Why is hydration so vital?

Below is a list of some of the places hydration helps in our bodies.

- **Brain and Spinal Cord/Central Nervous System/ Circulatory system**
 - Brain Volume (fluid)
 - Spinal Fluid (fluid)
 - Cell Nutrients (fluid)
 - Eyes/Vision
 - Temperature Control, (cooling and heating)
 - Fluid Movement from Feet and Legs
- **GI and Kidneys**
 - Digestion
 - Colon Health and Function
 - Kidney Function and Bladder Health
 - Flush out Toxins
 - Transport & Metabolize Medications & Nutrients
- **Sinus-Ears-Mouth-Throat**
 - Taste, Chewing, Swallowing, Saliva
 - Mucous Membranes Moist
 - Dental Health, Gums and teeth
- **Skin**
 - Largest Organ
 - Protects you from Bacteria, injury and Cancer
 - Scalp
 - Itching





Here is a plan that can help you drink more water:

Week One:

Morning: Drink 16 ounces (or 2 cups) of water to start your day of rehydration. You can expect to eliminate this in about 45 - 60 minutes. It may take two visits to the bathroom to completely empty your bladder. Remember your entire body needs to be replenished..

Noon: Repeat

Evening: Repeat. The timing of this should be before 6:00 pm, which will allow for more water if desired before bedtime. Now, your intake is at 48 ounces

For an added bonus, when you take a pill, drink 8 ounces (1 cup).

Never dump water out of your glass – drink it.

Week Two:

Add 16 ounces (or 2 cups) in the middle of the afternoon. Now you have successfully added 64 ounces of water to your daily routine.



Living Your Personal Best will be a regular column with Nurse Consultant, Valerie Stickel-Diehl. We want to address topics of interest to you. We encourage you to suggest future topics.

Send your ideas to
apdaill@apdaparkinson.org
or call Susan at (515)782-4386.

Things to consider:

Bladder capacity is 16 ounces. Wear some protective clothing until your bladder adjusts to holding 16 ounces. You are in training.

If you are not active, set a timer to go to the bathroom 45/60 minutes after drinking every 16 ounces.

*Movement leads to internal Movement.

The signal to urinate can be delayed, causing you to feel out of control. These suggestions are only suggestions, find your timing.

Carbidopa/Levodopa timing is also a good way to get hydrated. Drink when your medication is working to assist with reaction time to get a better signal and to get up and go.

You will feel better in time and you will start to feel MORE thirsty – reminding us to drink more water.

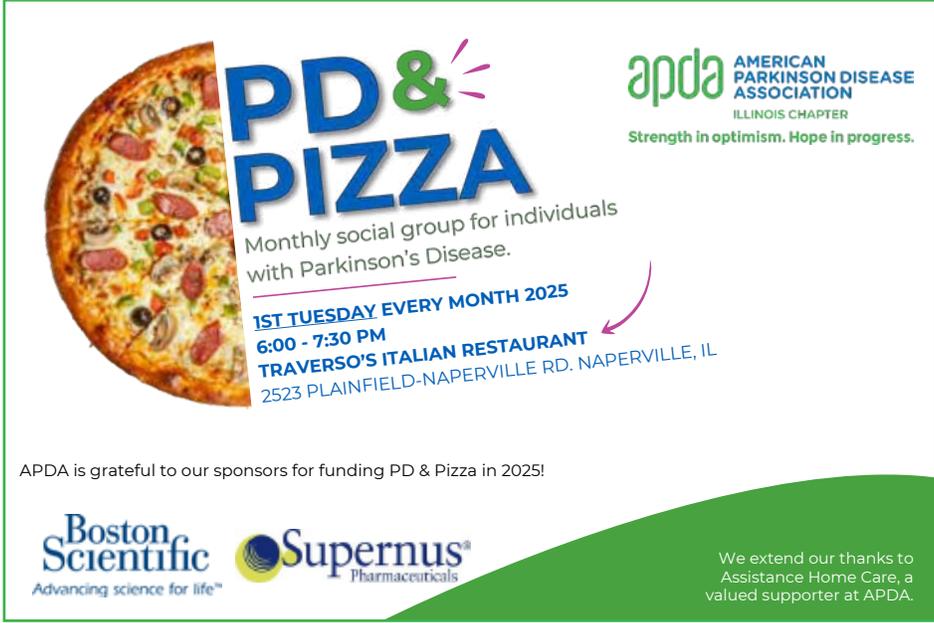
I hope this helps you live your personal best!

Thank you to Anne Scherer for advising and editing this article. I look forward to working with her in the next article, we will be discussing **Sleep**.

Strength in optimism. Hope in progress.

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