

YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM AND HOW TO ACCESS IT

Family Physician

- Looks after your general medical care, annual physical examinations, and acute problems.
- May treat your Parkinson's disease (PD).
- If you see a specialist, he/she will maintain communication with your GP.

Neurologist

- This is a specialist physician who has completed a three year training program in the medical/surgical area of his/her choice in an accredited training program.
- Some focus on diseases such as PD and other movement disorders.
- Will make or confirm the diagnosis of PD, recommend treatment and monitor your response.
- Requires a referral from your GP.

Movement Disorder Specialist

- Is a neurologist that has completed a full fellowship with another movement disorder specialist
- Specializes in Parkinson's disease and related conditions

Psychiatrist

- Diagnoses and treats mental disorders that can occur in PD such as depression, anxiety, and disturbances in feelings, thoughts, behaviour and cognitive processes.
- Treatments include psychotherapy, marital/family counselling and medication.
- Requires a referral from a GP or your neurologist.

Psychologist

- Trained to help you cope with the emotional impact of chronic illness and other issues.
- Techniques include psychotherapy and behaviour modification, among others.
- Some specialize in sophisticated testing of cognitive problems.
- Some are associated with hospitals and clinics where their services are paid for by provincial plans; in private practice cost may be covered by extended benefit insurance plans.
- No medical referral is required; See ON Psychological Association for listings.

Clinical Nurse

- Located in Movement Disorder Clinics across Canada.
- Provide education and counselling on all aspects of PD and how it affects your life, with ongoing care and help between clinic visits.
- Assists with adapting to medication and making dosage adjustments.
- Telephone counselling may help without the need of a clinic visit.
- Liaises with other members of your health care team to ensure optimum care.

Rehabilitation Therapists

- Assess mobility, balance and posture, prescribing exercise programs as needed.
- Advises which community based sports or exercise programs would be suitable.

- Offer techniques to improve walking and teach you and your family how to overcome problems such as falling, bed mobility and safety.
- When located in a hospital, costs are covered by the Medical Services Plan.
- Community physiotherapy may be covered by extended health plans.

Speech Language Pathologist (SLP)

- Can design a program to help you improve your communication.
- For swallowing you may be treated by a SLP, Occupational Therapist or Nutritionist.
- Often they are hospital based where a medical referral is required.
- Some have private practices and fees may be covered by extended health plans.

Occupational Therapist

- Addresses problems in the area of self care, work and leisure.
- Provides advice, instruction on adaptive equipment, safety awareness, energy conservation and mobility issues.
- OT advice is important before you purchase equipment or make changes in your home (e.g. bath bars) to avoid costly mistakes and to ensure your purchase is tax deductible.

Massage Therapists

- Provide short term relief from muscle stiffness and rigidity. They are based in private practice rather than hospitals and are not covered by provincial plans
- Some extended benefit plans provide limited coverage for their services.

Nutritional Services

- Help you to plan a healthy diet and advise you on how to prepare and enjoy your meals in ways that will take your symptoms into account.
- Most hospitals have an outpatient dietician and a physician referral may be required but there is no charge for the service.

Social Workers (SW)

- Help with social, emotional, financial and family concerns related to your illness.
- Trained in individual, family/marital counselling to address many of the changes that often occur while adjusting to a major medical illness, including Long Term Care arrangements.
- Help you get connected with the appropriate resources in your community.

Pharmacist

- Dispenses your prescription drugs and gives advice on over the counter medications, vitamin supplements and provides additional information about your prescribed medications.
- PLEASE USE ONE PHARMACY! If you are taking multiple drugs for multiple problems, you are less likely to encounter problems with one drug being incompatible with another if all your prescriptions are on file in one pharmacy.

Source: Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

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