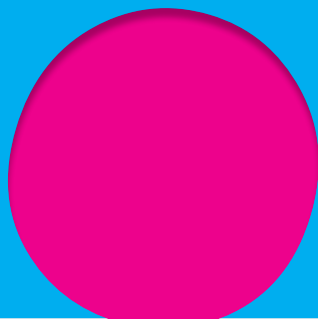


ANXIETY AND PARKINSON'S

Symptoms

Find out more about
anxiety and ways to
help you manage
the symptoms

PARKINSON'S^{UK}
CHANGE ATTITUDES.
FIND A CURE.
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ANXIETY AND PARKINSON'S

Some people with Parkinson's may experience anxiety.

This information describes what anxiety is and how it can make you feel. It also looks at steps you can take to help manage your symptoms, and what treatments are available.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear. Everyone has feelings of anxiety from time to time. It's a natural reaction to situations we find threatening or difficult, like moving to a new house or money problems.

Usually anxiety disappears when the situation changes, or if we get used to the situation or can move away from it.

But some people become anxious for long periods of time and for no clear reason.

This can make life difficult and may affect your work and social life.

If you feel anxiety is affecting your daily life, it's important to seek help from professionals as well as find things you can do to manage your symptoms effectively.

What are the main symptoms of anxiety?

It's important to be able to recognise the symptoms of anxiety, so it can be treated as soon as possible.

People with anxiety may feel some of the following:

- a sense of dread
- constant worry
- difficulty concentrating

You may also experience physical symptoms if you're feeling anxious.

These can include:

- sweating
- a pounding or racing heart (palpitations)
- tightness in the chest or feeling breathless
- dizziness
- trembling
- indigestion, nausea and stomach cramps

- looking pale
- a dry mouth
- muscle pain
- restless legs and difficulty maintaining restful sleep

When anxiety carries on for a long time you may have feelings of hopelessness. These feelings may affect your ability to carry out everyday activities.

Sometimes, you may have symptoms of depression as well as anxiety. Depression is more than temporary feelings of unhappiness or frustration. It's usually diagnosed when someone has lasting feelings of extreme sadness for days, weeks or months.

Find out more:
see our information
on depression
and Parkinson's.

Are there different types of anxiety?

There are three main types of anxiety, though these can overlap. Many people will experience more than one type.

Generalised anxiety disorder

This is when you experience excessive and uncontrollable worrying most of the time about everyday events in your life.

Panic attacks

These are short periods of sudden, intense feelings of fear. They often happen in situations that are likely to make you feel anxious. You may also have a racing heart, sweating and shortness of breath.

Some people think these symptoms are very serious, and they rush to the hospital for help. A panic attack may last between five and 20 minutes.

Phobia

This is when you feel frightened of something that's not dangerous and would not usually make other people feel scared.

For example, agoraphobia is the fear of being in situations where escape might be difficult, or help wouldn't be available if things go wrong.

How does anxiety affect people with Parkinson's?

For people with and without Parkinson's, anxiety is likely caused by a combination of several factors, including imbalances in brain chemicals, genetics and stressful life events .

Any concerns you have about living with a long-term condition, such as Parkinson's, may also cause anxiety.

Some people with Parkinson's have anxiety that happens when they're 'off'. When a

person takes their medication, their symptoms will improve. But these symptoms can sometimes come back before the next dose is due, causing a person's condition to fluctuate. This is called 'wearing off'.

If your anxiety symptoms increase when your medication is wearing off before the next dose is due, talk to your specialist or Parkinson's nurse. Changes to your medication regime may improve your symptoms.

If you go 'off' and have difficulties moving, it can also make you feel anxious. You may find that when your movement symptoms are better controlled by medication, your anxiety improves.

Even if you don't have 'on' and 'off' periods, you may still have generalised anxiety if your Parkinson's symptoms aren't properly treated. Again, changes to your medication may help.

Always speak to your specialist or Parkinson's nurse about any adjustments to your Parkinson's medication. Remember, don't stop taking your medication without talking to a healthcare professional, as this can be dangerous.

It's particularly important to talk to your healthcare professional about your anxiety as, in some cases, it may make other symptoms of Parkinson's worse. But getting help early can give you more control.

How is anxiety managed?

There are many things you can try to help manage your symptoms.

Finding ways to relax

Simple things like making time to relax can be helpful. Try doing things you enjoy, such as reading a book or listening to music.

Diet

Try to eat a healthy, balanced diet. It can also help to avoid too much caffeine (found in tea, coffee and some fizzy drinks), and alcohol, especially late in the evening.

These can make some of the physical symptoms of anxiety worse.

Find out more:
see our information on
diet and Parkinson's.

Exercise

You can help combat stress and release anxiety through regular exercise, such as walking or swimming.

Yoga

Yoga is a gentle exercise that aims to improve flexibility, strength, balance and breathing. There is some evidence that yoga could help with anxiety and stress.

Tai chi

Tai chi is a Chinese martial art that puts emphasis on

balance and movement. It involves moving the body slowly and gently – there's no physical contact. It may have psychological benefits, including reducing anxiety.

Complementary therapies

We hear from many people with Parkinson's who find complementary therapies relaxing. These include:

Massage

Many people find that having a massage helps them relax. A massage therapist may use various techniques, including stroking, kneading and rubbing, to manipulate the body using pressure. Massage isn't suitable for people with certain medical conditions, such as a history of bleeding disorders.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is part of traditional Chinese medicine. It involves a therapist inserting thin needles at particular points on your body. Although the evidence that acupuncture can reduce

anxiety is mixed, some people may find it helpful.

If you want to take anything by mouth or apply it to your skin as a complementary therapy, check with your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse first.

Find out more:
see our information on
complementary therapies
and Parkinson's.

There may be relaxation classes in your area. Visit the Parkinson's UK website parkinsons.org.uk and use our postcode search to find classes close to you.

Friendships and meeting others

Sharing your worries and fears with a trusted friend or family member can help reduce anxiety. Talking to other people with Parkinson's can also help, as you can share your experiences

and find out how others cope with similar problems.

Visit parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups to find your nearest group or call **0808 800 0303**.

You can also talk to other people with Parkinson's online at parkinsons.org.uk/forum

Counselling

If you prefer to speak to a professionally trained counsellor, ask your GP for information (many surgeries have counsellors attached to their practice).

There are also counselling organisations that can give you information and details of private counsellors, including the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (see the end of this information).

The mental health charity Mind has a guide, *Making sense of talking treatments*. The booklet explains the different types of talking,

therapies available, including counselling, how they can help and what they involve.

You can read the guide online at www.mind.org.uk/talkingtherapy or order a hard copy.

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

You may find cognitive behavioural therapy (sometimes called CBT) effective in dealing with anxiety. It works by changing 'unhelpful' everyday thoughts and behaviours that can lead to feelings of anxiety or make anxiety worse.

CBT can take place in groups or individually with a therapist, who may be a clinical psychologist, psychiatrist or specially trained nurse. It usually involves a course of weekly sessions.

There are a number of self-help CBT books that are recommended by the NHS for people with anxiety. Many of these are available at your

local library via the 'Books on Prescription' scheme.

Again, ask your GP or Parkinson's nurse for more advice or visit reading-well.org.uk

Medication for anxiety

Anti-anxiety medication, such as antidepressants and anxiolytics may help with anxiety if you have Parkinson's, under certain circumstances. Long-term use of anxiolytics are not generally recommended.

Speak to your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse about what may be best for you. They should also be able to advise you on how to take antidepressants alongside your Parkinson's medication.

Advice for family, friends and carers

Anxiety symptoms can hugely affect someone's quality of life. If this happens,

you should try to encourage the person affected to speak to their GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse. They may be referred to a mental health specialist who can recommend treatment.

If you're a carer, it's completely natural for you to feel many of the same feelings as the person with Parkinson's. These feelings may include anxiety, fear about the future, depression, fatigue and concern about any changes in your relationship.

With this in mind, you should also try to look after your own physical and mental health as much as you can. Taking care of yourself can be difficult, but it's important. It will also help you be better able to care for your loved one.

Many carers find it helpful to join a support group where they can meet other people in a similar situation. Many Parkinson's UK local groups have special activities for carers.

Visit parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups for details of your local group or contact our helpline **(0808 800 0303)**.

Carers UK and Carers Trust also run groups for carers. See the next section for details.

Find out more: see our [information for carers](#).

More information and support

Anxiety UK

Anxiety UK has a range of information and support services for people with anxiety.

03444 775 774

support@anxietyuk.org.uk

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

Visit the website to find
a therapist near you.

01455 8830
bacp@bacp.co.uk
www.bacp.co.uk

Carers UK

Carers UK provides
information and support
to people who are caring
at home. The charity has
support groups, branches
and local offices throughout
the UK.

0808 808 7777
advice@carersuk.org
www.carersuk.co.uk

Carers Trust

This charity provides support,
information and centres for
carers throughout the UK
and most centres run
carers' groups.

London office:
0300 772 9600

Scotland office:
0300 772 7701

Wales office:
0300 772 9702
info@carers.org
www.carers.org

Mind

Mind is a leading mental
health organisation serving
people in England and
Wales. The charity provides
support and advice on
all kinds of mental health
problems, including
depression. It has a range
of publications and local
support groups.

0300 123 3393
info@mind.org.uk
www.mind.co.uk

Inspire

Inspire offers a range of
services that provide
support around mental
health in Northern Ireland.

028 9032 8474
hello@inspirewellbeing.org

Parkinson's nurses

Parkinson's nurses have specialist experience and knowledge of Parkinson's. They can:

- support people coming to terms with their Parkinson's diagnosis
- help people to manage their medication, so they get the best results and fewer side effects
- make referrals to other professionals such as speech and language therapists and physiotherapists

Some nurses are based in the community, such as your GP surgery. Others are based in hospital settings and clinics.

Talk to your GP or specialist for more details on speaking to a Parkinson's nurse.

Parkinson's UK information and support

You can read our most up-to-date information at parkinsons.org.uk. You can order printed information by

calling **0330 124 3250** or visiting parkinsons.org.uk/orderingresources

If you'd like to speak to someone, our specialist adviser team can provide information about any aspect of living with Parkinson's.

They can talk to you about managing symptoms and medication, social care, employment rights, benefits, how you're feeling, and much more.

Call our team on:

0808 800 0303 or email hello@parkinsons.org.uk

We'll provide expert information over phone or email or put you in touch with an adviser locally.

If you'd like to meet other people living with Parkinson's in your local area, you can find friendship and support through our network of volunteers and local groups. Go to parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups or call our helpline to find out more.

Our forum is also a very active space to share and chat with others who really understand, at a time that suits you. Visit parkinsons.org.uk/forum

Thank you

Thank you very much to everyone who contributed to or reviewed this information.

Thanks also to our information review group and other people affected by Parkinson's who provided feedback.

Feedback

If you have any comments or feedback about our information, please call **0800 138 6593**, email feedback@parkinsons.org.uk, or write to us at Parkinson's UK, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ.

If you'd like to find out more about how we put our information together, please contact us at healthcontent@parkinsons.org.uk or visit our website.

Can you help?

At Parkinson's UK, we are totally dependent on donations from individuals and organisations to fund the work that we do.

There are many ways that you can help us to support people with Parkinson's. If you would like to get involved, please contact our Supporter Care team on **0800 138 6593** or visit our website at parkinsons.org.uk/donate

Thank you.

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We are Parkinson's UK.
Powered by people.
Funded by you.
Improving life for everyone
affected by Parkinson's.
Together we'll find a cure.

PARKINSON'S^{UK}

Free confidential helpline **0808 800 0303**
Monday to Friday 9am–6pm, Saturday 10am–2pm
(interpreting available)
NGT relay **18001 0808 800 0303**
(for textphone users only)
hello@parkinsons.org.uk
parkinsons.org.uk

Parkinson's UK, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ



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