

# SLEEP WELL WITH PARKINSON'S

**PARKINSON'S  
SLEEP WELL WEEK**

24-30th May

[www.epda.eu.com/sleepwell](http://www.epda.eu.com/sleepwell)

**If you have Parkinson's disease and find it difficult to sleep, you're not alone. 90% of people with the condition are similarly affected.**

Identifying the root causes of sleep problems is the first step to solving the issue. Disrupted sleep can be due to a number of things such as poor sleep hygiene, the symptoms of Parkinson's, or medicines for controlling it.

There's no blueprint for getting a good night's sleep. Try to be as relaxed as possible and develop an understanding of your main sleep problems by keeping a basic sleep diary for a week - so you can identify the biggest difficulties, as well the ones that are the easiest and quickest to fix.

## Improving your sleep environment

### General sleep hygiene



**Bedroom** – keep your bedroom a place of relaxation and cooler at night. A lower temperature promotes better sleep (16°C – 18°C is ideal).



**Routine** – keep to a regular routine, including a regular pattern of meals, exercise and a regular bed and wake time.



**Nutrition** – a well-balanced mediterranean type diet, has been shown to have therapeutic effects on sleep.



**Physical Activity** – moderate to vigorous exercise on a regular basis (depending on your health and circumstance) promotes sleep and reduces daytime sleepiness. Stretching and slow mobility exercises before bed can be helpful in reducing rigidity.



**Bedroom environment** – test a mattress before buying by lying on it for at least fifteen minutes, to assess it according to your body weight and temperature.

### Before bedtime



**Digestion** – leave a couple of hours for your meal to digest before bed. High-protein foods can interfere with Parkinson's medication, and carbohydrates may give poor sleep quality.



**Hydration and dehydration** – restrict your water intake an hour or so before bed to prevent you waking in the night



**Avoid stimulants** – both alcohol and caffeine are responsible for poor sleep. Caffeine can make you want to urinate and alcohol is responsible for poor quality sleep in the long run.



**Relaxation** – allow time to unwind before bed and adopt a routine before bedtime that encourages relaxation, such as having a warm bath or a massage, or listening to relaxing music.

### In bed



**Exposure to light** – an hour before you sleep avoid exposure to blue light from computers, tablets and smartphones which keep you alert. Sleep in total darkness if you can, but keep a torch in case you need light in the night.



**Thinking about the day** – try to switch off or write your thoughts down before you sleep, so your mind knows they will be dealt with later.



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## Dealing with sleep disturbance

**Talk to your doctor, neurologist or Parkinson's nurse if your symptoms are affecting your sleep** - there are plenty of solutions they can offer.

### What's keeping you awake at night?



#### **Pain, stiffness or involuntary movement**

– ask your doctor for medication to relieve symptoms. Or, if you already take medication, it may not be working very well so ask your doctor about changing the timing, the dose, or the prescription. Massaging your legs, relaxation exercises, or a warm bath before bedtime can also help.



**Medication affecting sleep** – sometimes prescribed medication can interfere with sleep by wearing off at the wrong time, or have side-effects like insomnia (levodopa or dopamine agonists, particularly when taken in the evening can do this). Medications such as diuretics (tablets to promote urine production and flow) and stimulants used to treat postural hypotension can also affect sleep. Working with your doctor to optimise the timing, dose and type of your medication is key to improving your sleep. Different types of medications exist, it's just a question of working out what best suits you.



#### **Nightmares, sleepwalking and other unusual sleep behaviours**

– parasomnias are a group of sleep behaviours which include acting out your dreams. Keep your sleeping environment safe by ensuring your bedroom is free of obstacles and consider putting your mattress low to the floor. Ask your doctor if changing your medication, or prescribing new ones, will help.



**Anxiety and depression** – this can be caused by changes in your brain chemistry, and some medications which, in turn, can affect your sleep. Speak to your doctor to see if short-term antidepressants might help, or explore counselling or Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) as these have shown to be effective.



**Frequent urination** – some medications, for high blood pressure for example, can cause frequent urination, as can eating salty foods or bladder infections. Try restricting your intake of liquids before bed to avoid night-time trips to the toilet. If getting to the toilet is difficult try using a bedside commode or portable urinal.



**Daytime napping** – try to stay awake during the day as this affects the quality of night-time sleep. If you need a nap, try to limit it to 20 minutes. Replacing your nap with outdoor exercise, or activities that keep you alert might help. Speak to your doctor about adjusting your prescription if you think your medication is making you drowsy.



**Turning over in Bed** – satin sheets or nightclothes can help you turn in bed, although using both at the same time makes you more likely to slide off the bed unintentionally. If you use satin sheets it's wise to have areas around the bed where you can get some grip.



**Sleep Apnoea** – if you wake with a headache, or if your bed partner says you snore loudly or gasp for breath you may have Sleep Apnoea. This can be relieved through a PAP machine so speak to your doctor for a proper diagnosis.

**For more detailed information on sleep go to [epda.eu.com/sleepwell](http://epda.eu.com/sleepwell)**

**Disclaimer:** The information in this leaflet is not a substitute for advice from your doctor, pharmacist or other healthcare professional. Don't stop your medication or alter the dose without first seeking advice from them. Whilst reasonable care has been taken to ensure the above information is accurate and up-to-date, we make no warranties or representations about accuracy, sequence, timeliness or completeness of the information.