



AMERICAN PARKINSON DISEASE ASSOCIATION

MISSOURI CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Oct/Nov/Dec
2025

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YOUR SECOND BRAIN: THE GUT'S ROLE IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE



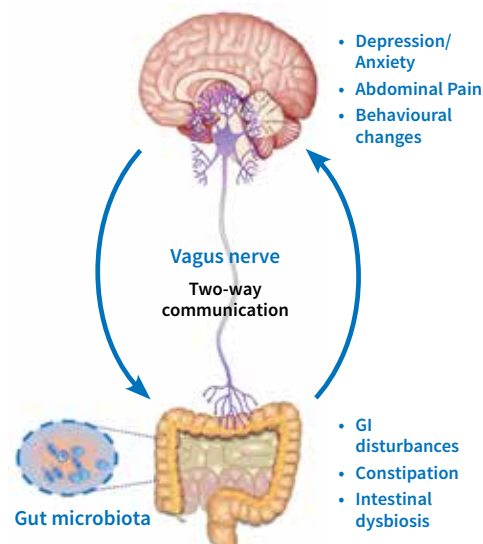
Richard A. Manfredy, MD, AM, FACP, is a physician-scientist who specializes in disorders of the gut-brain axis. His lab has made discoveries connecting Parkinson's disease with GI disorders and has translated those findings to benefit patients. Dr. Manfredy is a gastroenterologist and hepatologist at Cedar Valley Digestive Health, where he is Director of Motility, and is Assistant Professor, Adj. at Rush University Medical Center. He received his SB degree from MIT, AM from Harvard, MD from Tufts, completed internship and residency in medicine at Mount Sinai, and completed clinical and research fellowship at Rush. He is Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Gastroenterology, and Hepatology, and was elected as a Fellow of the American College of Physicians.

When most people think about Parkinson's disease (PD), the first things that come to mind are tremors, stiffness, or slowed movements. But there's another side of Parkinson's that isn't talked about as much: **the gut.**

Doctors and scientists now call the gut our "second brain." Why? Because it has its own network of nerves and trillions of bacteria that help control not just digestion, but also mood, immunity, and even brain health. And for people with PD, the gut often plays an especially important role.

Why the Gut Matters in PD

The gut and brain are connected by a "highway" called the vagus nerve. This pathway allows the two to constantly communicate. What happens in the gut can influence the brain, and what happens in the brain can affect the gut.



YOUR SECOND BRAIN: THE GUT'S ROLE IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE (cont.)

In PD, many people experience digestive problems such as constipation, bloating, or slow digestion years before movement symptoms appear. Scientists now believe these gut changes may be one of the earliest warning signs of Parkinson's.

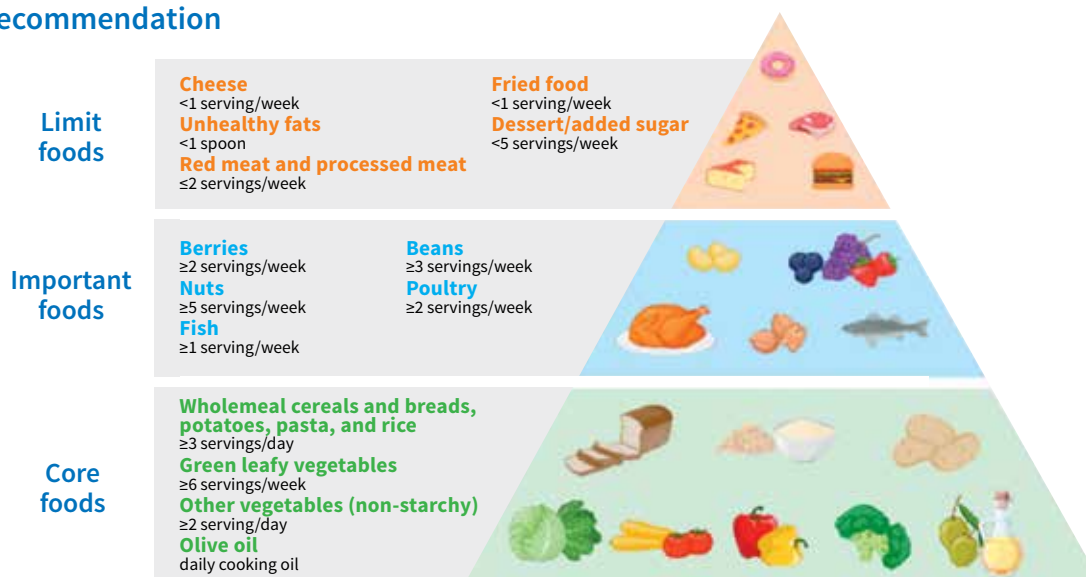
Constipation: A Common but Overlooked Problem

Constipation is one of the most common non-motor symptoms of PD. It is not just uncomfortable; it can affect everyday life in big ways. People with constipation may feel sluggish, bloated, or anxious about their next bowel movement.

Constipation also matters because it can make PD medications, like levodopa, work less effectively. If the gut is slow, the medicine is absorbed more slowly too. This means motor symptoms like tremor or stiffness may be harder to control.

Unfortunately, common remedies such as laxatives, stool softeners, or fiber supplements often don't work very well for PD-related constipation. That's why new treatments are needed.

MIND diet recommendation



Zhang, L.; Liu, R.; Song, Z.; Zhang, X. Exercise, Diet, and Brain Health: From the Perspective of Gut Microbiota Regulation. *Nutrients* 2025, 17, 1686.

Caring for Both Brains: Lifestyle and Diet

Thinking of the gut as a second brain reminds us that gut health is brain health. Beyond medications, lifestyle choices play a powerful role in reducing inflammation and supporting both gut and brain function.

- **Mediterranean and Mind diet:** Rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, olive oil, nuts, and fish, this diet has been shown to lower inflammation and support brain health. Studies suggest it may also reduce progression of PD symptoms and improve overall quality of life (Estrada et al., *Nutrients* 2022). See the graphic below for recommendations.
- **Yoga and mindfulness:** Gentle movement, stretching, and breathing exercises can improve gut motility, reduce constipation, and lower stress, which in turn benefits both brain and gut health (Cramer et al., *Movement Disorders* 2020).
- **Probiotics and prebiotics:** Research is exploring how balancing gut bacteria may improve digestion and potentially affect neurological health (Lubomski et al., *Journal of Parkinson's Disease* 2020).

Cedar Valley Digestive Health Research Email: hpunukula@cvmcspc.com

2025 MIDWEST PARKINSON CONFERENCE RECAP

Thank you to all who joined us for the 2025 Midwest Parkinson's Conference on May 1.

It was an extraordinary day filled with meaningful connections, learning, and moments that inspired hope for the future.

Participants left with practical strategies to better navigate life with Parkinson's, and most importantly, a renewed sense of optimism and empowerment. From insightful presentations to opportunities for community engagement, the energy throughout the event was truly remarkable.

This conference wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors. Your ongoing commitment to the Parkinson's community continues to make a lasting impact.

SAVE THE DATE! Next years conference will be Monday, April 27th from 11:30am-4:00pm



CARE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

Caring for Someone with Parkinson's Disease

By June Van Klaveren



My husband and I are in the fairly early stages of Parkinson's Disease (PD), with him being diagnosed in early 2024. In the months since, we've learned a great deal about living with this complex condition. While every individual's experience with PD is unique,

here are some practical strategies that have helped us navigate daily life:

1. Educate Yourself (and Your Loved One).

Knowledge truly is power. Learning about Parkinson's and its possible progression can help both patient and caregiver feel more prepared. Reliable sources—such as nonprofit organizations like the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA)—offer valuable educational materials. I made it a priority to attend webinars and seminars led by PD experts, and each time I walked away with new insights. While research cannot predict every turn in the journey, it can equip you with tools to face challenges more confidently.

2. Assist with Daily Tasks— But Encourage Independence.

Activities such as dressing, bathing, eating, and mobility often require assistance. However, it's important to balance help with independence. As caregivers, it's tempting to step in and complete tasks quickly, but allowing your loved one to do as much as they can fosters dignity, confidence, and strength.

3. Manage Medications Effectively.

Staying on schedule with medication is essential for symptom management. Weekly pill organizers are simple, effective tools. In our household, I fill the pill boxes each week and check to be sure the meds have been taken on time. This shared responsibility helps maintain his independence while ensuring accuracy.

4. Create a Safe Home Environment.

Safety adaptations can greatly reduce the risk of falls and accidents. Installing grab bars in the shower and bathroom was our first priority. We also added a short bed rail to help with getting in and out of bed, as well as additional handrails and a stair lift where needed. These changes provide both safety and peace of mind.

5. Keep Communication Open.

We talk about Parkinson's the same way we would any other aspect of daily life—without minimizing or exaggerating its importance. Honest, open conversations help reduce stress and ensure that both caregiver and patient feel heard.

6. Encourage Social Interaction.

Isolation can worsen both physical and emotional challenges. My husband feels noticeably better when we have visitors or go out together. His rollator walker has been a game-changer—helping him avoid falls and giving him the confidence to stay engaged socially.

7. Seek Support—for Both Patient and Caregiver.

Support groups can be a lifeline. I joined a caregiver support group through the APDA and found it invaluable. Hearing from 12–17 other caregivers each month not only provides practical ideas but also reminds me I'm not alone. Caregiving is demanding, and taking time for my own social connections helps recharge and assist my husband when needed. Caring for someone with Parkinson's is an ongoing and sometimes challenging journey—one that requires patience, adaptability, and continuous learning. And always be open to help when it's offered.

Tips and Tricks for Parkinson's

Provided by: Drake University Occupational Therapy Doctoral Students Class of 2025

Typing & Computer Use

- **Voice Text:** Use voice text to type faster and reduce typing errors.
- **Computer Settings:** Change the mouse setting on your computer to filter our handshaking.
- **Large Keyboards:** Use a larger keyboard with separated buttons to make typing easier and prevent hitting keys by mistake.
- **Use Predictive Text:** Predictive text is a setting on most smartphones and computers that will complete a word for you after you type the first few letters.

JOIN TREMBLE CLEFS!

A free and fun therapeutic singing program for people living with Parkinson's and their care partners. Led by a professional Music Therapist with live accompanists, each session blends **voice exercises, movement-to-music, and familiar songs** that lift spirits and strengthen community.

Meets Every **Friday, 1:00–2:30 Pm**
Current Season: **August 22, 2025 – June 2026**
(Jump In Anytime!)

*Come and Add Your Voice—
We Can't Wait To Sing With You!*

St. John United Church of Christ
(Fellowship Hall)
405 S 5th Street
St. Charles, Missouri 63301



SCAN for more
information



EXERCISE CLASS SCHEDULE

For more information please refer to www.apdaparkinson.org/mo or call 636.778.3377

MISSOURI CLASS SCHEDULE

Carondelet YMCA

Tuesday 11:00am - Exercise for Parkinson's
Friday 12:00pm - Exercise for Parkinson's

Chesterfield APDA Office

Tuesday 9:00am - Seated Exercise | Level 1
Tuesday 10:00am - Circuit Training | Level 3
Tuesday 11:00am - Strength & Cardio | Level 2
Wednesday 10:00am - Movement Training | Level 2
Wednesday 11:00am - Seated Exercise | Level 1
Thursday 11:00am - Tai Chi for Parkinson's
Thursday 12:00pm - Parkinson's Boxing | Level 3
Thursday 1:00pm - Strength & Cardio | Level 2
Thursday 2:00pm - Seated Exercise | Level 1
Friday 11:00am - Tai Chi & Meditation

Chesterfield SSM Health & Day Institute

1st & 3rd Tues 3:30pm - Exercise for Parkinson's

Chesterfield YMCA

Mon/Wed 12:15pm - Parkinson's Pedalers | Level 2

Crestwood - Sports Medicine & Training Ctr.

Tuesday 9:00am - Exercise for Parkinson's

Eureka - Timbers of Eureka

Tues/Thurs/Fri 12:30pm - Exercise for Parkinson's

Jefferson County YMCA

Mon/Thurs 10:00am - Exercise for Parkinson's

Kirkwood YMCA

Monday 11:45am - Parkinson's Pedalers | Level 2

Maryland Heights YMCA

Tues/Thurs 11:30am - Exercise for Parkinson's

Olive Crossing - SSM Health & Day Institute

1st & 3rd Tues 3:30pm - Exercise for Parkinson's

South County YMCA

Tues/Thurs 3:00pm - Exercise for Parkinson's

South City YMCA

Tues/Thurs 12:00pm - Exercise for Parkinson's

St. Charles - SSM Health & Day Institute

1st & 3rd Tues 3:30pm - Exercise for Parkinson's

St. Peters - BJC - Medical Office Building 1

Thursday 10:00am - Strength & Cardio | Level 2
Thursday 11:00am - Seated Exercise | Level 1

Ste. Genevieve Co. Community Center

Wednesday 11:15am - Exercise for Parkinson's | Level 2

Sunset Hills - Friendship Village

Contact Friendship Village for Schedule 314-270-7700

Warrenton - SSM Day Institute

1st & 3rd Tues 3:30pm - Exercise for Parkinson's

Washington YMCA

Mon/Wed 1:00pm - Exercise for Parkinson's
Friday 11:30am - Exercise for Parkinson's

Virtual via Zoom

Tuesday 9:00am - Seated Exercise | Level 1
Thursday 2:00pm - Seated Exercise | Level 1

ILLINOIS CLASS SCHEDULE

Breese/Clinton Co. YMCA

Tues/Thurs 12:30pm - Exercise for Parkinson's

Carlinville Area Hospital

Tuesday 10:00am - Exercise for Parkinson's

Columbia/Monroe County YMCA

Mon/Wed 12:05pm - Exercise for Parkinson's

Decatur YMCA

Mon/Wed/Fri 11:00am - Pedaling for Parkinson's
Tues/Thurs 9:00am - Parkinson's on the Move

Downtown Belleville YMCA

Mon/Wed 11:00am - Exercise for Parkinson's

East Belleville YMCA

Tues/Thurs 11:00am - Exercise for Parkinson's

Edwardsville YMCA

Tues/Thurs 11:00am - Exercise for Parkinson's

O'Fallon YMCA

Tues/Thurs 12:00pm - Exercise for Parkinson's

Quincy YMCA

Tues/Fri 10:30am - Fit to Fight PD Boxing

Springfield - First Presbyterian Church

Tues/Thurs 1:30pm - The Joy of Movement

Virtual via Zoom

Wed 10:30am - The Joy of Movement

SUPPORT GROUP SCHEDULE

For more information, please call 636.778.3377 or email apdamo@apdaparkinson.org

MISSOURI SUPPORT GROUPS

Ballwin – Meramec Bluffs Care Center

4th Tuesday 2:00pm

Cape Girardeau – Cape Girardeau Library

2nd Monday 5:30pm

Chesterfield – APDA Office

2nd Monday 10:30am – **Caregivers ONLY**

2nd Tuesday 1:00pm – **Early in Diagnoses (2-4 years)**

4th Tuesday 1:00pm – **Newly Diagnosed (0-2 years)**

Eureka- Timbers of Eureka

1st Tuesday 1:45pm

Kansas City – Johnson County Rehab Hospital

2nd Wednesday 4:00pm

Olivette – Private Home Care Company- Hybrid

3rd Tuesday 11:00am

Rolla – Phelps Health Cancer Inst., Conf. Rm B

3rd Tuesday 2:30pm

South County – Cedarhurst of Tesson Heights

4th Wednesday 10:00am

Ste. Genevieve – Community Center

2nd Wednesday 10:00am

South St. Louis City- Carondelet YMCA

2nd Tuesday 12:10pm

St. Ann – Rock Road Branch Library – Hybrid

2nd Thurs 12pm – **Black & African American families**

St. Peters – Spencer Road Library

1st Tuesday 1:00 pm

St. Peters – Spencer Road Library

2nd Tuesday 10:00am – **Caregivers ONLY**

Sullivan- Missouri Baptist of Sullivan

2nd Wednesday 1:30pm

Washington – Public Library

2nd Monday 3:00pm

Virtual via Zoom

Adult Children ONLY – 2nd Wednesday 9:00am

Black & African American Families – 2nd Thurs 12:00 pm

Caregivers ONLY – 3rd Monday 1:00pm

We Care, South Asian Families – 3rd Friday 2:00pm

All welcome – 4th Tuesday 6:30pm

Young onset ONLY – Every Thursday 6:00pm

ILLINOIS SUPPORT GROUPS

Alton - SSP Main Bldg., The Meeting Room

2nd Wednesday 1:00pm

Alton - SSP Wellness Center

2nd Tuesday 2:00pm – **Caregivers ONLY**

Belleville - Southwestern Illinois College's Programs & Services for Older Persons

3rd Monday 1:30pm

Carbondale - Prairie Living at Chautauqua

1st Wednesday 1:00pm

Carlinville - Carlinville Area Hospital, MOB Comm Rm.

4th Tuesday 11:00am

Centralia - Heritage Woods Independent Living

2nd Wednesday 2:00pm

Champaign - Savoy United Methodist Church

Every Monday 10:00am

Decatur - Westminster Presbyterian Church

3rd Thursday 1:30pm

Edwardsville - YMCA Niebur Center

1st Tuesday 2:00pm

Greenville - Bond County Senior Citizens

2nd Tuesday 1:00pm

Highland - St. Joseph Hospital, Sullivan Conf. Rm.

4th Wednesday 2:00pm

Okawville - St. Peters UCC Church Hall

1st Tuesday 6:30pm

Quincy - Public Library

2nd Saturday 10:00am

Springfield - Chatham United Methodist Church

4th Friday 1:30pm

BRAIN GAME - WORD PUZZLE

Cognitive exercise is just as important as physical exercise. Activities like puzzles, reading, card games, or learning something new help keep your brain sharp and engaged. Social interaction, spending time with friends and family, is also a powerful way to stimulate the mind.

Directions: Fill in each box with a word that fits in the category on top and starts with the letter on the left.

	Sports	Food/Drink	Holidays	States
G	<i>Example: Golf</i>			
T				
F				
I				

This word puzzle is provided by Cassie Serrata at Connect Therapy.

All About Dementia with Dr. Eid: Featuring Lewy Body and Parkinson's Disease Dementia

An APDA Education Program in Partnership with the Alzheimer's Association



Scan to Register

Thursday, November 6th

1:30 - 2:30 pm

Doors Open at 1:00

Clark Family Branch Library

1640 S Lindbergh Blvd.

St. Louis, MO 63131

Make a Difference Today and Save on Taxes

Did you know you can support APDA and reduce your taxable income at the same time? If you're age 70 ½ or older, you can make a tax-free gift of up to \$100,000 each year directly from your IRA to a qualified nonprofit like APDA.

This giving option known as an IRA Charitable Rollover or Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) allows you to avoid paying income tax on your distribution, satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution (RMD), and make a meaningful difference in the lives of people impacted by Parkinson's disease.

Looking ahead into the new year: QCDs from IRAs will become even more valuable starting in 2026. Transfers made directly to charity will still reduce your required minimum distribution (RMD), lowering taxable income. For those who itemize deductions,

QCDs will also help avoid the impact of a new law that limits part of the charitable contribution deduction.

No matter the size, your gift provides vital programs, education, and support to the PD community, while giving you valuable tax advantages.

To set up your QCD, please contact your IRA custodian or financial advisor.

For more information on ways to give to APDA Missouri, please contact:

Michelle Bolk,
Director of Development
mbolk@apdaparkinson.org
636-778-3378



apda AMERICAN PARKINSON DISEASE ASSOCIATION MISSOURI CHAPTER

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CARING FOR OUR LOVED ONES WITH PARKINSON'S

by Katie Freeman, MSW



Katie Freeman, MSW is the Manager of Programs and Community Engagement for the Northwest Chapter of the American Parkinson Disease Association. They support Parkinson's caregivers by facilitating support groups,

offering one-on-one consultations, leading educational programs, and providing information and referral services. Below are Katie's answers to a few questions commonly asked by caregivers:

1. What do I call myself? Caregiver? Caretaker? Care Partner?

It may seem like semantics, but these terms reflect the relational dynamic and philosophy of care between a person with Parkinson's and the people responsible for their care. Think about the power dynamics implied in the words take versus give versus partner. Taking or giving is something you do to someone while partnering is something you do with someone.

Caregiver is generally considered the most neutral term and can refer to a close family member or a paid professional who cares for a person with Parkinson's. Care Partner is typically reserved for a spouse or family member who partners with their loved one with PD to manage their care. Caretaker has become less popular over the years, but it's often used interchangeably with caregiver.

For some of us, the distinctions between these terms are meaningful and important, while others don't care as much. Just know that there is no right or wrong way to refer to yourself; it's simply a matter of what feels true and genuine for you and your loved one with Parkinson's.

2. What does caregiving look like throughout the different stages of PD?

Your doctor may have told you that there are five stages of Parkinson's, based on a staging system created by Drs. Hoehn & Yahr in the 1960s. While it has some flaws, this staging system can help us understand how Parkinson's motor symptoms progress over time. With each stage of Parkinson's, there is a corresponding stage of caregiving. Expect your role as caregiver to evolve over time as Parkinson's symptoms progress and your loved ones' needs change.

3. I feel overwhelmed, burnt out, and powerless. How can I motivate myself to keep going?

Caregiving can be a way that we show love, respect, and gratitude to the people in our lives who have Parkinson's. But it can also be challenging work that impacts our physical, emotional, and spiritual health. In those moments when you feel the most overwhelmed and powerless, remind yourself that you have a choice in every situation. Am I going to help this person? Or am I going to walk away? For many of us, the idea of walking away is unthinkable. But the reality is that people choose not to care every day.

Instead of doing that every day, you wake up and choose to care. You choose to help someone who is vulnerable. You choose to ensure that this person is safe and their needs are met. You put your values into action. And I'm so grateful for all of you making that choice.

Once you've gotten through that moment of emotional intensity, the next step is to pick up your phone and ask for help.

4. How do I ask for help?

Caregivers often have the hardest time asking for help. Many of us pride ourselves on our ability to care for others and don't want to admit that we can't do everything. We can often assume that other people won't understand what we're going through or that it's a burden on someone else if we ask for their help. We don't want to interfere with our children's or friends' lives.

However, most of us have people in our lives who want to help but don't know how. Have open and honest conversations with these people about the specific tasks that you need help with or the kind of support you need. Let your friends and family tell you what they are able to offer. Communication is key here on both sides.

Remember that helping out feels good! Just like you find meaning in caring for your loved one with Parkinson's, others will find meaning by helping you. Give your loved ones the opportunity to help. For many, that invitation to help will be a gift and an invitation to be closer to you and your loved ones with Parkinson's.



**Feeling overwhelmed
with a Parkinson's
diagnosis?
Let's focus on what's
important!**



PD ESSENTIALS

PD Essentials is specifically for those who have been diagnosed with Parkinson's in the past two years. Getting the diagnosis of Parkinson's can be so overwhelming. PD Essentials helps you focus on what is important. These individual sessions lasts about an hour and are either in-person or on zoom. You will gain a good understanding of what PD is and action steps you can take now. PD Essentials Upcoming

- Wednesday, October 8, 1:00 PM APDA Missouri Chapter Office
- Friday, December 12, 1:30 PM APDA Missouri Chapter Office
- Wednesday, February 11, 4:30 PM Virtual- ZOOM

16100 Chesterfield Parkway W, Ste. 125
Chesterfield, Missouri 63017



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