

NUTRITION STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT PARKINSON'S SYMPTOMS

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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 & 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.