

NON-MOTOR SYMPTOMS

Parkinson's disease is characterized by a number of motor symptoms, such as tremors, slowness of movement, muscle rigidity and postural instability. However, other so-called **non-motor symptoms** may also appear as the disease progresses, sometimes even before diagnosis. Their impact on daily life makes them a major issue for the quality of life of those affected and can be a significant source of stress for family and care partners.



This leaflet highlights the main non-motor symptoms, grouped according to the bodily functions or systems affected. Although they are common, their onset, severity and progression are different for each person.

AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM DYSFUNCTION DISORDERS

The autonomic nervous system is the part of the nervous system responsible for controlling involuntary bodily functions such as heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, digestion and libido. It plays an essential role in **maintaining the body's internal balance** and ensures communication between the brain and other organs.

In people living with Parkinson's disease, neurological damage is not limited to the brain. The autonomic nervous system can also be affected. This can lead to several dysfunctions, **for example in the cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and urogenital systems, as well as in the regulation of body temperature and perspiration.**

COGNITIVE DISORDERS AND NEUROPSYCHIATRIC SYMPTOMS

Difficulties with thinking and reasoning (cognitive disorders) often develop gradually and can affect a range of functions **like problem-solving, decision-making, spatial organization, memory, regulation of mood and behaviour.**

Some people may also experience depression, anxiety, apathy, visual hallucinations, or obsessive-compulsive disorder.



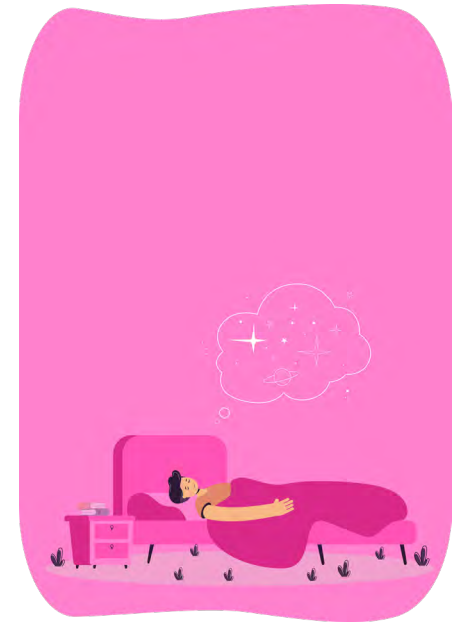
SENSORY DISORDERS AND OTHER SYMPTOMS

Sensory symptoms are common in Parkinson's disease and may appear before motor symptoms. A reduced sense of smell or even a complete loss of smell, is often one of the first signs. Other symptoms may affect vision or taste, including an altered memory of flavours.

Abnormal sensations such as tingling, numbness, or burning, as well as intense and sometimes unexplained pain affecting the bones, joints, or muscles, may also occur. Many people experience different types of pain at the same time.

Beyond sensory disorders, some people may also experience other symptoms such as unexplained weight changes, seborrheic dermatitis (red, greasy, and sensitive patches), leg swelling, and fatigue.

As a result, these conditions can have significant impacts on mobility, safety, and cognitive abilities.



SLEEP DISORDERS

Sleep disorders can arise early in the development of the disease and precede motor symptoms by several years. Common problems include insomnia, characterized by difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up during the night, as well as REM sleep behavior disorder, in which the person may shout, talk or physically act out their dreams.

Other symptoms include extreme daytime **sleepiness, restless leg syndrome (an intense urge to move the legs) and involuntary pauses in breathing during sleep, a condition known as sleep apnea.**

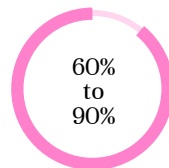
KEY POINTS

About 98% of people living with the disease have at least one non-motor symptom.

90 %
Autonomic nervous system disorders affect more than 90% of people with Parkinson's and disrupt several bodily functions.



About 30% to 50% of people experience pain as part of this disease.



Sleep disorders affect 60% to 90% of people with Parkinson's.

CATEGORIES OF NON-MOTOR SYMPTOMS IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Autonomic Nervous System Dysfunction Disorders

Cardiovascular system

- Sudden drop in blood pressure when standing up (orthostatic hypotension)
- Decrease in blood pressure after meals (postprandial hypotension)

Urogenital system

- Urinary difficulties: urgency, incontinence, retention
- Sexual dysfunction: ejaculation disorders, pain during sexual intercourse, changes in libido

Gastrointestinal system

- Constipation
- Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing)
- Gastroparesis (delayed gastric emptying)
- Nausea
- Sialorrhea (excessive salivation)

Body temperature regulation

- Hyperhidrosis (excessive sweating)
- Heat or cold intolerance

Cognitive Disorders and Neuropsychiatric Symptoms

- Anxiety and depression
- Apathy (lack of motivation)
- Obsessive-compulsive behaviours (food, shopping, gambling, sex)
- Cognitive decline (memory, attention, judgment, dementia, etc.)
- Hallucinations and delusions

Sensory Disorders and other symptoms

- Changes in taste perception
- Reduced or lost sense of smell
- Unexplained pain
- Paresthesia (burning sensation, tingling, numbness)
- Hearing difficulties
- Vision problems (double vision, dry eyes)

Sleep disorders

- Insomnia
- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Restless leg syndrome (an intense urge to move the legs)
- REM sleep behaviour disorder
- Sleep-related breathing disorders (including sleep apnea)

Other symptoms

- Unexplained changes in weight
- Seborrheic dermatitis (red, oily and sensitive patches)
- Swelling of the legs
- Fatigue

Parkinson Québec provides information and raises awareness about Parkinson's disease, supports the community, and promotes scientific research in collaboration with its regional partners.



QUÉBEC



<https://parkinsonquebec.ca>



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