



PARKINSON'S DISEASE

## SPOTLIGHT ON PARKINSON'S DISEASE: COMMUNICATION AND INTIMACY

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## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS



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## PRESENTATION



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## COMMUNICATION = INTIMACY

*When there is a health challenge, it is even more important for couples to talk about their intimacy.*

Ways to start:

1. Share the goal of "being closer."
2. Be brave and vulnerable.
3. Offer ideas, rather than complaints.
4. Try to create a win-win.



## MORE HINTS

Talk before, during, and after sex.  
Ask for what you DO want.  
What would make it even better?  
Share problems/be allies.



## WAYS TO FIND HELP

- American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Therapists  
[www.aasect.org](http://www.aasect.org)
- American College of Sexologists  
[www.americancollegeofsexologists.org](http://www.americancollegeofsexologists.org)
- Social Worker at your health center.
- Skype with someone trained in another city or state





## PHYSICAL SEXUAL CHALLENGES

- Slowness of movement, tremor, and rigidity interferes with lovemaking.
- Reduced desire due to fatigue or medications
- Men struggle with getting or keeping erections, or getting to orgasm.
- Women may experience dryness and pain, and some struggle with orgasm as well.
- Facial animation diminished.

## EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES FOR PATIENTS

- Negative body image
- Depression and grief
- Reduced self esteem
- Communication difficulties
- Attention issues





## SEXUAL CHALLENGES FOR PARTNERS

- Changing roles from partner to care partner.
- Tiredness from taking on more responsibilities.
- Their own fear, anxiety, depression, grief.
- Loss of sexual interest due to PD symptoms.
- Inability to read nonverbal cues.
- Loss of emotional connection.



## EXPAND HOW YOU DEFINE "SEX"

- Think of "sex" as a buffet.
- Change your sexual pattern.
- Enjoy sensual touch/non-demand pleasuring.
- Be open to orgasm in non-penetrative ways or not at all.





## PHYSICAL INTIMACY IS A BUFFET

- Make all sensual and sexual touch PLEASURE focused.
- Use more of your body to touch more of their body.
- Let go of “What am I suppose to do...” or “What we usually do...” and listen to what you want to do. What are you a “Yes” to?

## DESIRE

- Desire often kicks in once we start.  
(responsive desire vs. spontaneous desire.)
- What would help you have a willingness to begin?
- Look at what you DO want, rather than what you don't want.
- Reconnect with your own sexual spark.





## “BRIDGING TIME”

“Bridging Time” is a buffer of time **before** being physically intimate to let go of “doing” and..

drop into your body and connect with your own sexual energy.

It supports you in relaxing and moving into being present and receptive.



## SOOTHE YOUR FEARS

- Let go of expectations or “should’s.”
- Realize sex changes as any relationship progresses.
- Let go of your thoughts, come back to your body.
- Remember sexuality and intimacy is more than sexual functioning.
- Talk, offer touch, surrender to touch.



## MAKE PHYSICAL INTIMACY A PRIORITY

- Schedule it.
- Look for opportunities to have it.
- Notice what is in the way.
- Be willing to change habits.



*Parties, vacations, and a good meal all involve planning...so does sensual and sexual activity.*

## CONNECT WITH YOUR HEARTS

- Look into your partner's eyes.
- Step away from technology
- Spend time together having fun.
- Be compassionate with yourselves.
- Be present and kind with each other.
- Read to each other, pursue shared activities
- Empty your "frustration/anger" tank periodically.







## TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

Share with your doctor feelings of depression, concerns regarding changes in sexual performance, decreased libido, or difficulties with current relationships.

Medications can contribute to sexual problems.



## HOW TO ASK?

- “Can I talk to you about the changes in our sexual life, or my sexual experience?”
- “What are the sexual side effects of the medications I am on?”





## SUMMARY

- Communicate with your partner.
- Focus on connection and pleasure.
- Expand your definition of “sex.”
- Make being physically close a priority.
- Talk to your doctor.

## QUESTION & ANSWER



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## CLOSING REMARKS



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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION,  
ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS,  
OR FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Please visit our website  
[apdaparkinson.org](http://apdaparkinson.org)

Or call us  
**1-800-223-2732**