

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

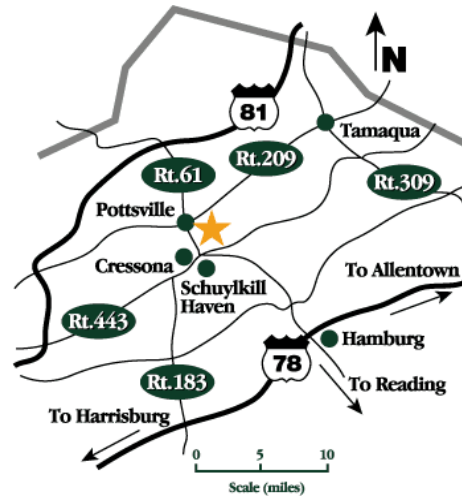
This support group is designed to provide ongoing education and support to those suffering from Parkinson's disease and significant individuals in their lives. Meetings provide the opportunity to contribute information about the disease, provide education, openly discuss feelings and attitudes, share stories and products that may be helpful to others and provide support to both sufferers of the disease and their family/caregivers.

WHAT HAPPENS AT MEETINGS

Meetings are open to the public and may include informative lectures from individuals in the medical or research field. Films, handouts, or demonstrations may also be part of the meetings. Generally, meetings begin with a review of current events and members may openly discuss any information that may be helpful to others in terms of new medications, treatments, research, etc. Meetings also provide time for those with Parkinson's to speak exclusively to each other about their feelings and attitudes as well as family/caregivers having the same opportunity with each other. The meetings last about 2 hours. Everyone is encouraged to participate at their own comfort level.

Meetings are held on the 1st Friday of each month from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. in the conference room.

**For more information call:
570-621-9500**



★ Schuylkill Rehabilitation Center is conveniently located in Pottsville



Parkinson's Disease Support Group

**300 SCHUYLKILL MEDICAL PLAZA
POTTSVILLE, PA 17901**

HOURS: MON.-FRI. 7AM-6PM

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WHAT IS PARKINSON'S DISEASE?

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a neurological disorder caused by the gradual loss of cells in a small part of the brain called the substantia nigra. The loss (death) of these cells produces a reduction in a vital chemical called "dopamine," which causes symptoms that may include shaking of hands, slowing down of movement, stiffness, and loss of balance.

Although this illness most often affects older individuals, particularly those over the age of 55, PD may also affect people in their 30's and 40's and appears to be slightly more common in men than in women.

HOW IS PD DIAGNOSED?

There are currently no blood or laboratory tests proven to help in diagnosing sporadic PD. Therefore the diagnosis is based on:

- ❖ Medical History
- ❖ Neurological Examination

NOTE:

This disease can be difficult to diagnose accurately. Doctors may sometimes request brain scans or laboratory tests in order to rule out other diseases.

SYMPTOMS

- ❖ Resting Tremor (Hands, Arms, Legs, Jaw, & Face)
- ❖ Bradykinesia (Slow Movement)
- ❖ Rigidity (Stiffness of the Muscles)
- ❖ Postural Instability (Impaired Balance & Coordination)
- ❖ Stooped Posture (Tendency to Lean Forward)
- ❖ Pain
- ❖ Fatigue and Aching
- ❖ Loss of Facial Expression
- ❖ Reduction in Speech Volume and Clarity
- ❖ Difficulty in Swallowing
- ❖ Change in Size of Handwriting
- ❖ Dry Skin
- ❖ Urinary Problems
- ❖ Constipation
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Sleep Disruptions

HOW IS PD TREATED?

At present, there is no cure for PD. Treatment options have expanded greatly in recent years, and new treatments are becoming available every year. Therapeutic options can be divided into:

- ❖ **Non-Pharmacological**
 - Nutrition
 - Education
 - Support
 - Exercise
- ❖ **Pharmacological**
 - Medications
- ❖ **Surgical**

PROGNOSIS

PD is both chronic (persists over a long period of time), and progressive (grows worse overtime). Although some people become severely disabled, others experience only minor motor disruptions. Tremor is the major symptom for some patients, while for others tremor is only a minor complaint and other symptoms are more troublesome. No one can predict which symptoms will affect an individual patient, and the intensity of the symptoms also varies from person to person. PD does not appear to significantly shorten the lifespan of its sufferers. It can be thought of as an illness that people live with, rather than being fatal.