

What to expect and How to Prepare for Coronavirus with Parkinson's Disease

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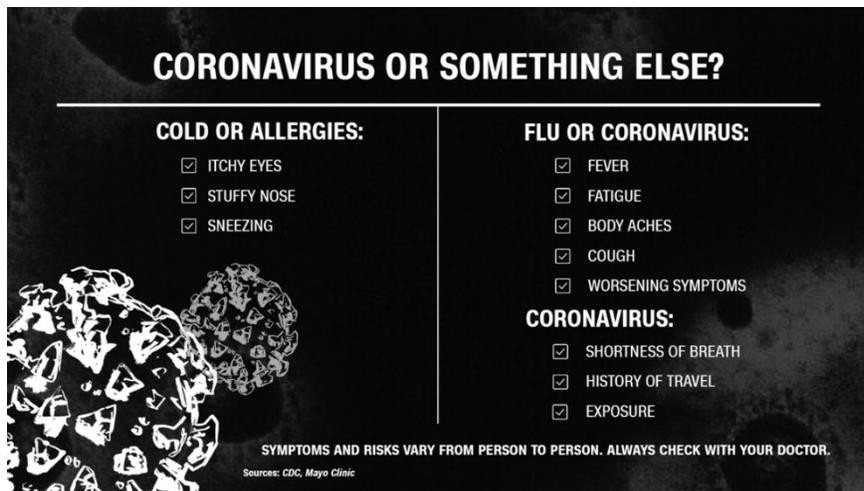
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3/14/2020

There has been a lot of conflicting and rapidly changing information put out by various sources about the Coronavirus (COVID-19). This can be very distressing and confusing to many who are trying to stay safe and navigate through these tough times while living with Parkinson's Disease. The Parkinson's Association of San Diego would like the community to know that we are here to help provide support, education, and information resources about COVID-19 as it pertains to Parkinson's Disease. However, for the most up to date information about COVID-19 please refer to the CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html>) or call the local San Diego Coronavirus Hotline by dialing 2-1-1 from any phone.

What is the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- A new coronavirus that emerged in China in December 2019 which causes primarily a respiratory disease.
- Symptoms include cough, fever and shortness of breath. COVID-19 can be severe, and some cases have caused death.
- Spread is from person to person by physical contact and droplets in air from sneezing or coughing.
- Diagnosed with a laboratory test (long Q-tip used to swab back of throat) .
- There is no coronavirus vaccine yet. Prevention involves frequent hand-washing, coughing into the bend of your elbow and staying home



Who is at risk and why all the hype?

We are all at risk (young and old) but those who are over the age of 60 and have certain underlying health problems (cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, hypertension, cancer) are at greater risk of becoming more severely ill and have higher associated death rates. COVID-19 is far deadlier than the seasonal Flu virus with death rates that increase by age. Currently at the time of this briefing, there are over 3000 confirmed cases of COVID-19, which is likely an underestimate given current limitations on testing. According to several epidemiological studies, as diagnostic capabilities are increased, we can expect a doubling of cases every 6 days, in the absence of substantial containment measures. Therefore, it's possible that we could have 1 million cases in the U.S. by the end of April; 2 million by May 7; 4 million by May 13; and so on, but DON'T panic. This is just to stress the importance of taking COVID-19 seriously and to listen to advice about what you can do from healthcare providers and ultimately the CDC guidelines.

What can you do to protect yourself while living with Parkinson's Disease?

- Most importantly don't panic. Stress and anxiety will only make your Parkinson's symptoms worse.
- Wash your hands and wash them often for at least 20 seconds.
- Carry hand sanitizer to use when in public that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Use disinfectant wipes when in public spaces; for example, wipe down grocery cart handles or surfaces that you have to touch. Avoid touching doorknobs/ handles.
- Avoid touching your face.
- If you are sick or have any symptoms, stay home and avoid close contact with others who are sick
- If you cough or sneeze, do it into your elbow.
- If you do develop symptoms and they become concerning or moderate to severe, call your primary care doctor or neurologist and if they are not available and you think that you need more immediate care, call your local urgent care or hospital ER rather than just showing up, so that you don't potentially infect others around you. Many of the hospitals in San Diego are in the early stages of ramping up preparations for expected increased volumes of potential COVID-19 cases that will be presenting to the hospitals. There will be screening and triage tents set up at all hospitals to handle potential incoming cases. You also can contact the local San Diego Coronavirus Hotline by dialing 2-1-1 from any phone 24hrs a day/ 7 days a week.
- Avoid non-essential travel within or outside the U.S.
- Avoid large gatherings of people in indoor environments (meetings, seminars, events, churches, malls, stores, hospitals, nursing homes, schools etc.) and if you must, try to keep a safe distance (6 feet) from other people
- Check your pantry and make sure that you have extra food rations and staples that you use or need on a regular basis in your home so that you don't have to go out.
- Make sure that you have extra medicine on hand; take inventory and reorder any that are running low.
- **Get an Aware in Care Kit and put the contact info of your doctors and current list of your meds inside it in the event that you need to go to the hospital so that you can inform healthcare providers about your Parkinson's Disease special needs.** If you don't have one of these kits, they can be ordered for free from the Parkinson's Foundation by calling 1-800-4PD-INFO (473-4636) or go to their website at www.parkinson.org.
- Get a medical alert card and keep it with you at all times; you can print one from the Parkinson's Foundation website.
- Stay in touch with family, friends, neighbors or whomever your support network is via phone or email to keep people aware of how you are doing and to stay on top of changes that may be occurring in your community.
- If you do not have a strong support network, there is the "You Are Not Alone" (YANA) program for people with Parkinson's and Care partners who have no immediate family members or friends who could consistently check on their welfare through the San Diego County Sheriffs Department and San Diego Police Department. For more info go to www.sdsheiff.net under senior volunteer patrol section.
- Remember that it is just as important for care partners to stay healthy as it is people who have Parkinson's disease.

- Utilize home delivery services whenever possible; nearly all grocery stores and pharmacies have delivery options and there are other food delivery options like Uber eats and Grubhub plus groceries are available for delivery through Amazon.com.
- Check to see if your doctor's office is offering Telemedicine office visits instead of going into the office. Many are offering this option where they conduct the visit via video while you are in the comfort of your own home.

For any questions, concerns, or if you are in need or someone you know is in need of assistance or more information regarding COVID-19, we are recommending that you contact the local San Diego Coronavirus Hotline by dialing 2-1-1 from any phone or go to www.211sandiego.org. This hotline and website is providing up to date information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on COVID-19.

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