

CONDITION GUIDE

Parkinson's: a plain-English guide

For people living with Parkinson's and the families who help. What it is, the questions people search for, what helps day to day, and where the NDIS, aged care and Kinship fit in.

Some mornings are slow, and that's fine, as long as nobody rushes you. This guide is for people living with Parkinson's and the families who help.

Parkinson's is a progressive neurological condition. It happens when nerve cells in the brain can't make enough dopamine, a chemical that helps control movement (healthdirect). It mainly affects movement and mood, and changes over time.

The best-known signs are tremor, stiffness, slowness and changes to posture. But Parkinson's isn't only about movement. Fight Parkinson's lists non-motor symptoms such as pain, depression, sleep problems, memory changes, constipation and bladder problems, and notes these can affect daily life as much as the movement changes.

Most people are diagnosed around 65, and about 1 in 10 are diagnosed before 45 (healthdirect). There's no cure yet. Medicines, surgery for some people, exercise and lifestyle changes can help manage symptoms, and it's possible to live with Parkinson's for a long time (Fight Parkinson's).

A note on words: we say "Parkinson's" rather than "Parkinson's disease", following Fight Parkinson's guidance on the community's preference. Estimates of how many Australians live with Parkinson's vary between sources, from more than 150,000 (Parkinson's Australia) to about 219,000 (Fight Parkinson's).

Key facts

- **50 a day** Australians diagnosed with Parkinson's
- **Around 65** the average age at diagnosis
- **1 in 10** people diagnosed are younger than 45
- **About half** of people with Parkinson's experience anxiety or depression

Figures: Parkinson's Australia (50 a day); healthdirect and Fight Parkinson's (age at diagnosis, anxiety and depression).



What helps, day to day

- **Keep moving.** Exercise may slow the progression of Parkinson's and help with mobility, posture and mood (healthdirect). Physios and exercise physiologists can tailor a program.
- **Fibre and water.** A high-fibre diet of fruit, vegetables and grains, with plenty of water, can help prevent constipation (healthdirect).
- **Make falls less likely.** Walking, freezing and falling are common challenges (Fight Parkinson's). Clear paths, good lighting and the right equipment help.
- **Mood is part of it.** Anxiety, depression and apathy can be symptoms of Parkinson's itself. Tell family and the doctor, so they're treated, not mistaken for not trying (healthdirect).
- **You don't have to do it alone.** Parkinson's Australia info line: 1800 644 189. Fight Parkinson's information line: 1800 931 031. Both are free.

How the NDIS can help

To be eligible for the NDIS you need to be younger than 65 when your application is received, an Australian citizen or permanent resident (or Protected Special Category visa holder) living in Australia, and have an impairment that's likely to be permanent and substantially reduces your ability to do everyday things.

Many people are diagnosed around 65, so age matters here. You must be younger than 65 on the day your NDIS application is received. If you're 65 or older, aged care is the path: contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422.

- 1 Connect with an NDIS partner (use the office finder at [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)) or call the NDIS on 1800 800 110.
- 2 Work with your treating health professional to gather evidence about your disability and how it affects daily life.
- 3 Complete your application with your NDIS partner, or by yourself using the access request form.
- 4 Submit it. Your NDIS partner can do this for you, or use the NDIS service hub, post it (NDIA, GPO Box 700, Canberra ACT 2601) or take it to a local office.
- 5 Wait for the decision. The NDIS tells you within 90 days once your application and all your evidence are in. You can ask for a review if you disagree.

The NDIS is changing. New NDIS laws passed in August 2026. From 1 October 2026, budgets for social and community participation and for daily living skills are being reduced as plans are reassessed or newly approved, and a new way of planning is due from April 2027. Check [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au) for the latest.



How Kinship Uniting Services can help

We support people, not diagnoses. For someone living with Parkinson's, that means help that doesn't rush, from the same support worker every visit.

We understand. Parkinson's can make buttons, cutlery and the shower harder, and how you feel can change across a single day. Medicines need to be taken on time. And it isn't only about movement: sleep, mood, constipation and memory can all play a part.

Partners often become carers gradually, without anyone asking them. You want help that keeps to the medication routine and lets the person do as much as they can for themselves.

We're qualified. Kinship Uniting Services is a registered NDIS provider (4-GWVHCEY), operating in disability and aged care since 2017, and we've supported hundreds of clients and families. Our founder, Shazia Begum, has spent more than 15 years alongside people living with disability. Our registered high intensity supports include medication management. The same support worker comes every visit, and families get updates as standard.

Here's how we can help.

- **Daily living and personal care.** Help with showering, dressing, meals and the house, at a pace that works on slow days too. Daily living support
- **Medication management.** Medication management is on our registered high intensity list. High intensity support
- **Community participation.** Getting to exercise classes, appointments, the club and the shops. Community participation
- **Respite for the family.** A familiar support worker stays with the person you care for at home or takes them out, so you can rest, get to your own appointments or simply have the afternoon. NDIS-funded or booked privately. Respite care
- **Private nursing and help at home.** Anyone can book privately, while funding is sorted or alongside it. For private nursing, send us an enquiry and we'll talk it through. For other services, call us for a quote. Private services
- **For people 65 and over.** Our CHSP-funded aged care is domestic assistance only, in Northern Sydney and the Southern Highlands. We're applying to deliver Support at Home but can't take clients under it yet. Other aged care help is available via referral or partners. Aged care



Bladder and bowel changes are common with Parkinson's. For independent advice, the National Continence Helpline (1800 33 00 66) is free and staffed by nurse continence specialists. Our sister business, Equipit, supplies continence products such as adult nappies, continence briefs and bed protection (equipitdsp.com). Equipit is the product-supply arm of Kinship Uniting Services, an NDIS registered and CHSP approved provider since 2017. Please note: Equipit is part of the same family of businesses as Kinship, and you're free to buy continence products from any supplier you choose. Equipit is not an NDIS registered provider, so agency-managed NDIS funds can't be spent with Equipit. If you're self-managed or plan-managed, check with your plan manager first. More at kinshipunitingservices.com/continence-products.

For families, carers and referrers

For families and carers. If you're a partner who has slowly become a carer, your wellbeing matters too. Respite with a familiar worker gives you time off, and Carer Gateway (1800 422 737) offers support of its own.

For support coordinators and plan managers. If you coordinate supports or manage plans for an NDIS participant living with Parkinson's, call us about daily living and high intensity medication management. We'll be upfront about current availability. More at kinshipunitingservices.com/for-referrers.

Where to get help

- **Parkinson's Australia info line:** 1800 644 189
- **Fight Parkinson's information line:** 1800 931 031 (free, Mon–Fri 9am–5pm AEST)
- **Parkinson's NSW:** parkinsonsnsw.org.au
- **My Aged Care (65 and over):** 1800 200 422
- **NDIS (under 65):** 1800 800 110
- **National Continence Helpline:** 1800 33 00 66
- **Carer Gateway:** 1800 422 737
- **Kinship Uniting Services:** 0437 733 744 or 0424 756 143, info@kinshipunitingservices.com, 39 Victory Road, Colebee NSW 2761

Your checklist

- ☐ Keep an up-to-date list of medicines and the times they're taken
- ☐ Ask your GP about a referral to a physio or exercise physiologist
- ☐ Check the home for trip hazards and poor lighting
- ☐ Tell the doctor about mood, sleep, bladder or bowel changes, not just movement
- ☐ Under 65? Apply to the NDIS before your 65th birthday (1800 800 110)
- ☐ 65 or over? Register with My Aged Care (1800 200 422)
- ☐ Write down what a good day and a slow day look like, for your support workers

Questions people ask

What are the early signs of Parkinson's?

Early symptoms can be vague: fatigue, mild depression, restlessness or localised muscle pain (healthdirect). A reduced sense of smell can appear years before movement symptoms (Fight Parkinson's). See your doctor about shaking, stiffness, balance problems or slowed movement.

Is Parkinson's hereditary?

Doctors don't yet know the exact cause. Contributing factors include ageing, genetic changes, exposure to toxins, some medicines and infections (healthdirect). Ask your GP about your own family history.

Is Parkinson's a form of dementia?

No. It's classed as a movement disorder. Some people do have changes in thinking and memory over time, and Fight Parkinson's covers this in its symptom information. Raise any change with your doctor.

How long can you live with Parkinson's?

Fight Parkinson's says Parkinson's doesn't directly cause people to die, and it's possible to live with it for a long time, although symptoms do get worse over time.

Is Parkinson's covered by the NDIS?

It can be, if you apply before you turn 65 and meet the other rules. As of March 2025 there were 4,500 NDIS plans listing Parkinson's as a primary or secondary condition (AIHW). If you're 65 or older, support comes through aged care.

Does Parkinson's cause incontinence?

It commonly leads to constipation and bladder problems, including urgency, frequency and needing to go at night (Fight Parkinson's). The National Continence Helpline gives advice on continence and Parkinson's.



How do we get started with Kinship?

Call 0437 733 744, or send an enquiry through our website. We'll ask about the person first: what a good day looks like and what's getting harder. Then we'll tell you plainly whether and how we can help. If there's an NDIS plan, have it nearby. If there isn't one yet, we can still talk it through.

Ready to talk? We're here

If you'd like us to help with this, call 0437 733 744 and we'll talk it through. We'll tell you plainly whether and how we can help, including what's possible if you're over 65.

Call 0437 733 744 or 0424 756 143 · info@kinshipunitingservices.com · 39 Victory Road, Colebee NSW 2761 · kinshipunitingservices.com/get-support

Deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment? Contact us through the National Relay Service: Speak & Listen 1300 555 727, TTY 133 677, SMS relay 0423 677 767.

Sources

healthdirect: Parkinson's disease: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/parkinsons-disease>

Fight Parkinson's: What is Parkinson's: <https://www.fightparkinsons.org.au/understand-parkinsons/what-is-parkinsons/>

Fight Parkinson's: Signs and symptoms: <https://www.fightparkinsons.org.au/understand-parkinsons/signs-symptoms/>

Fight Parkinson's: Support and services: <https://www.fightparkinsons.org.au/living-with-parkinsons/support-services/>

Parkinson's Australia: Statistics: <https://www.parkinsons.org.au/statistics/>

AIHW: Parkinson's disease in Australia:

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/neurological-conditions/parkinsons-disease-in-australia>

NDIS: How to check your eligibility: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/applying/eligibility-requirements/how-check-your-eligibility>

NDIS: What are the NDIS disability requirements:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/applying/eligibility-requirements/what-are-ndis-disability-requirements>

NDIS: How to apply: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/applying/application-process/how-apply>

NDIS: Securing the NDIS for future generations (new NDIS laws):

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/ndis-laws/securing-ndis-future-generations>

NDIS: New way of planning: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/changes-ndis/new-way-planning>

My Aged Care (phone 1800 200 422): <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/>

Continence Health Australia: National Continence Helpline:

<https://www.continence.org.au/help-and-support/national-continence-helpline/>

Carer Gateway: <https://www.carergateway.gov.au/>