



Angel's Loving Care, Inc.
1940 North Tustin Ave. Suite 112
Orange, CA 92865
714-283-3741 Phone
714-283-3701 Fax
800-913-3550 Toll Free
www.angelslovingcare.com

SPECIAL REPORT HEALTH SERIES

What Is Parkinson's Disease?

Parkinson's disease is a chronic neurological disorder caused by a lack of the chemical dopamine in the brain. Symptoms are tremors, rigidity and bradykinesia [slow movements]. In addition one may notice a stooped posture, a mask-like facial expression, shuffling gait, arms kept fixed to the side of the body when walking and difficulty with fine hand movements. Not all patients have all of the symptoms and careful diagnosis is necessary.

Parkinsonism results from destruction of the part of the brain called substantia nigra. The substantia nigra is made up of cells called neurons or nerve cells which perform the work of the brain. When these nerve cells in the substantia nigra are destroyed, the symptoms of parkinsonism result. The substantia nigra works with another part of the brain called the basal ganglia which itself is made up of the caudate nucleus and the putamen. Together, these parts of the brain work to initiate the control movements. The nerve cells of the substantia nigra make a chemical called dopamine which is important for the basal ganglia to correctly program movement. Most of the therapies for parkinsonism are directed towards replacing the action of the lost dopamine in the basal ganglia.

The cause of parkinson's disease is unknown. At this time there is no cure; however, there are many medicines available to help alleviate the symptoms. It is important to be treated by a neurologist. He may have to try several medicines before finding the one that helps the most. Each patient reacts to the medicines differently. Most patients with a proper combination of medication and exercise should be able to lead a happy and useful life with the least amount to inconveniences.

Source:

What Is Parkinson's Disease? By Abraham Lieberman, M.D.,
<http://www.pdcaregiver.org/WhatIsParkinsonsCondensed.html>