



The Rizzi Difference
RIZZI GERIATRIC ASSOCIATES

THE RIZZI DIFFERENCE

NEWSLETTER ∞ APRIL 2022



April is National Parkinson's Awareness Month

Parkinson's Disease is one of the most common neurological disorders in the United States, affecting one million people. Parkinson's is typically diagnosed at age 50-60 and is characterized by tremors, stiffness and difficulty walking. Parkinson's Disease is a chronic, progressive illness and symptoms typically worsen over time. The disease is more common in men than women.

As Parkinson's Disease progresses, patients may experience behavioral changes, insomnia, depression, memory impairment and fatigue.

What causes Parkinson's Disease?

Parkinson's Disease occurs when nerve cells (neurons) that produce dopamine and norepinephrine become impaired or die causing the symptoms of Parkinson's Disease. Loss of dopamine causes the motor symptoms of Parkinson's while the loss of norepinephrine causes many of the non-motor symptoms including difficulty controlling blood pressure and even swallowing.

Although there are theories as to the cause of Parkinson's Disease, most experts agree that Parkinson's is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors.

Some Symptoms of Parkinson's Disease

- Stiffness
- Tremor
- Rigidity
- Poor balance





The Rizzi Difference
RIZZI GERIATRIC ASSOCIATES

THE RIZZI DIFFERENCE

NEWSLETTER *∞* APRIL 2022

How is Parkinson's Diagnosed

Although there are no imaging or laboratory tests to diagnose Parkinson's Disease, the diagnosis is made by obtaining a careful history, neurological exam and ruling out other causes for the symptoms being experienced by the patient. Medications for Parkinson's Disease may be given as a trial, and if symptoms improve, then it is likely that the patient has Parkinson's Disease or an associated Parkinson-like illness.

Treatment of Parkinson's Disease

Medications for Parkinson's Disease focus on increasing available dopamine or preventing its degradation in the brain as well as drugs that help with involuntary muscle movement and rigidity.

The main treatment for Parkinson's Disease is Levodopa/Carbidopa (Sinemet). Nerve cells use Levodopa/Carbidopa to make dopamine.

Other medications include:

- Dopamine agonists that mimic the role of dopamine in the brain.
- MAO-B Inhibitors to slow down an enzyme that breaks down dopamine in the brain.
- COMT Inhibitors which are drugs that break down the enzyme that degrades dopamine.
- Amantadine which is an antiviral drug. This helps control involuntary movements.
- Anticholinergic drugs: These help reduce rigidity.

Other treatments include physical therapy to work on muscle strengthening and balance. Occupational therapy to work on activities of daily living and speech therapy teach voice and communication techniques as well as swallowing.

The team at Rizzi Geriatric Associates has extensive experience in caring for patients with Parkinson's Disease and can collaborate with specialists to ensure that you are cared for competently, and that you have the resources you need to improve the quality of your life.

We are honored to care for you!

www.TheRizziDifference.com