

[About the versions](#) | [Low graphics](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact us](#)

Last Updated: Tuesday, 13 December 2005, 00:50 GMT

[E-mail this to a friend](#)[Printable version](#)[News Front Page](#)[World](#)[UK](#)[England](#)[Northern Ireland](#)[Scotland](#)[Wales](#)[Business](#)[Politics](#)[Health](#)[Medical notes](#)[Education](#)[Science/Nature](#)[Technology](#)[Entertainment](#)[Have Your Say](#)[Magazine](#)[In Pictures](#)[Week at a Glance](#)[Country Profiles](#)[In Depth](#)[Programmes](#)[BBC SPORT](#)[BBC WEATHER](#)[BBC NEWS](#)[On This Day](#)[NEWSWATCH](#)

Parkinson's hope over 'implants'

US scientists have moved a step closer to developing a brain implant therapy for Parkinson's disease symptoms.

The most common drug treatment for the brain condition is levodopa, but the pills can leave people susceptible to involuntary movements such as twitches.

The Alabama University team found in tests on six patients, eye cells which produce levodopa can be implanted safely and without the side effects.

The study was published in the Archives of Neurology journal.

But the team and UK experts said large-scale studies were now needed.

Levodopa is used to treat some of the common symptoms of the irreversible brain condition, such as tremors and spasms. It is normally prescribed a few years after diagnosis as the symptoms get worse.

Eye cells that form retinal pigment epithelial tissue produce levodopa and can be isolated from human eye tissue and implanted in the brain.

Research on animals has shown that the cell implants can help treat the symptoms safely.

But the US study showed it can work on humans too and paves the way for a larger, more thorough study.

Implants were given to six patients with advanced Parkinson's disease.



Parkinson's is a chronic irreversible brain condition

SEE ALSO:

- [Patch may help treat Parkinson's](#)
02 Aug 05 | Somerset
- [Case inspires Parkinson's crusade](#)
19 Jul 05 | Bristol
- ['Drug gave me back my life'](#)
31 Mar 03 | Health

RELATED INTERNET LINKS:

- [Parkinson's Disease Society](#)
- [Archives of Neurology](#)

The BBC is not responsible for the content of external internet sites

TOP HEALTH STORIES NOW

- [Face of woman braves media glare](#)
- [Drug refusal 'a death sentence'](#)
- ['Hit squads' to help tackle MRSA](#)
- [UK pledges £3m for safe abortions](#)

[RSS](#)| [What is RSS?](#)

“ We look forward to this technique being tested comprehensively and objectively in a larger trial and await the results with interest ”

Kieran Breen, of the Parkinson's Disease Society

Evaluations were carried out regularly for two years and are now being done yearly.

'Safe'

The researchers said the implants were "well tolerated" and helped improve movement by up to 48% without causing the involuntary twitches.

Lead researcher Natividad Stover said: "Improvement was also observed in activities of daily living, quality of life and motor fluctuations."

And he added a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled study was now in the pipeline to test the treatment further.

Kieran Breen, director of research at the Parkinson's Disease Society, said the findings suggested eye cell implants could eventually be developed to treat the symptoms.

"The most common form of treatment to help manage these fluctuations is carefully timed medication.

"The results of this early study suggest that eye cell implants could be developed further to control the motor symptoms of Parkinson's in the future.

"We look forward to this technique being tested comprehensively and objectively in a larger trial and await the results with interest."

 [E-mail this to a friend](#)

 [Printable version](#)

LINKS TO MORE HEALTH STORIES

[News Alerts](#) [E-mail services](#) [Mobiles/PDAs](#) [Headlines for your site](#)

[Help](#) [Privacy and Cookies](#) [Policy](#) [News sources](#) [About the BBC](#) [Contact us](#)