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## Nutritional Guidelines For Parkinson Patients

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1. Parkinson's disease slows gastric motility. Swallowing is prolonged; the stomach takes longer to empty and food traverses through the intestines more slowly than in a person the same age who does not have PD. For this reason, food is better utilized by the body when small amounts are eaten frequently rather than 3 large meals per day.
2. Most Parkinson patients would get more benefit from Sinemet taken on an empty stomach. Taken prior to eating (even 15 minutes is beneficial), with 4-5 oz. non-dairy fluid, the pill is "washed" from the stomach through the pylorus valve and into the small intestine where absorption begins. Think of it as allowing the levodopa to get a "head start" on absorption versus the food about to be eaten!
3. If Sinemet causes nausea a small cracker or bite of fruit can be taken with any doses required between meals. Pretzels are excellent because they are portable and require no refrigeration. Ginger can also be used to offset nausea, or in prolonged cases Of levodopa-induced nausea, Motilium (Domperidone) can be ordered from London for individual patient use. Your physician can authorize this if required.
4. Only a small percentage of patients with PD need to alter the amount or timing of protein intake to avoid interfering

with Sinemet absorption. These are patients who experience significant on/of motor fluctuations, and typically take Sinemet six or more times per day

5. Weight maintenance is a problem for many Parkinsonians. Frequent, small meals may help maintain optimal weight. Liquid supplements can be useful. Sometimes patients are so diligent in limiting fat intake and worrying needlessly about protein restrictions that they deprive themselves of much needed calories.
  
  6. Although most dietitians (consider supplements unnecessary if a patient consumes adequate amount of a variety of foods, some healthcare providers view a daily vitamin and mineral supplement as a nutritional "insurance policy". This should not be a megadose formula. Take supplements with food. One regime is to take the multiple formula on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and alternate with an anti-oxidant formula ( Vit A, C, and E) on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. It is generally accepted that free radicals are in excess and can adversely affect brain function. Anti-oxidants may help combat that process. It is crucial to note that Parkinson patients with limited financial resources should not neglect taking adequate doses of anti-Parkinson drugs with proven benefit in order to afford supplements, which may or may not provide significant benefit.
  
  7. Just like other sensory processes, the natural sense of thirst diminishes with age. Anti-Parkinson drugs also "dry out" the body. It is important to drink water "by the clock", not unlike one would schedule crucial medications. This enhances the absorption of both nutrients and medications, and reduces the risk of dehydration.
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