Maintaining Oral Health With Parkinson's

Parkinson's disease is a movement disorder that affects motor functions and coordination. Tremors are a classic sign. Often the facial muscles and tongue are involved, affecting speech and the ability to chew.[1]

It can be difficult for people with Parkinson's disease to carry out routine tasks, including daily brushing and flossing. Because good oral health plays a key role in overall health, proper oral hygiene is very important.

If maintaining oral health is a challenge, try these tips:

Switch to electric: Electric toothbrushes do the work for you! They are easier to hold and have a rotating or oscillating head that can assist in the finer movements associated with toothbrushing.



Adjust your grip: Try placing your toothbrush handle into a tennis ball or bike handle. The larger grip will be easier to hold.

Talk to your dentist: If holding a toothbrush is difficult, talk with your dentist about other options or treatments specific to your needs.

Avoid mouthwash: Mouthwash can be a choking hazard if you have a weakened swallowing ability.[2]

Did you know?

Parkinson's disease affects 1 million individuals in the United States.[3]

Quick bites

Make dental visits easier by:[4]

- Informing your dentist about your condition, limitations and any medication you are taking.
- Planning appointments around medication dose schedules, about 60 to 90 minutes after taking medication.
- Asking your dentist to adjust the dental chair to an angle that makes it easier to swallow.

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Visit us online for more information on oral and overall health!

1. National Parkinson's Foundation, "Oral Health and Parkinson's Disease," web. **2.** Parkinson's Disease Foundation, "News and Review," web. **3.** Parkinson's Disease Foundation, "Statistics on Parkinson's," web. **4.** Parkinson's Disease Foundation, "Understanding Parkinson's: Swallowing and Dental Challenges," web.

Healthy Smile, Happy Life

Delta Dental of Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, and Tennessee

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