

# The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group

Hagerstown, MD and the Four-State Area

## Monthly Newsletter

September 2011

Visit Our Website at:

[www.fareshare.net/Parkinsons/](http://www.fareshare.net/Parkinsons/)

Volume 1, Issue 3

### Recap of August's Meeting

We had a good turnout at our July meeting including a number of persons who had not been there for a while. Our speaker was unable to attend due to an unexpected family emergency, so the group decided to have a general discussion.

One of the topics discussed was taking crushed Carbidopa/Levodopa with orange juice or soda. The following was found on the internet.

### Taking Crushed Carbidopa/Levodopa with Juice

It appears if you want to speed absorption of Carbidopa/Levodopa (CL), crush them and add the crushed drug to orange juice. The acidity of the juice helps dissolve the tablets and speeds up digestion. It is reported that Rose's Lime Juice also works well on CL tablets. If you use concentrated Rose's Lime Juice, it should be diluted with water before using. Once the drug is dissolved, drink immediately.

**Warning: This is not an acceptable method if you use a variety of "continuing or timed release" (CR) drugs. Also dopamine agonists such as Requip XL taken once a day should never be crushed. Please be careful you are sure what you are crushing! Also to be safe, it would be prudent to ask your doctor or your pharmacist about using this method.**

**Continued on the reverse side (Page 2) along with other topics and relevant information.**

### September Meeting Topic

**Join us for our Parkinson's Support Group Meeting At Homewood at Williamsport**

**Thursday, September 1st**

Presentation by

**Dr. Zoltan Mari, Neurologist  
Johns Hopkins**

Lunch will be served at 1:30 PM  
Followed by a meeting at 2:30 PM

Our meetings are held at the  
Hilltop Assisted Living Facility.

Please call for directions:

Kathy Lanham @ Homewood  
301-582-1750

No reservation is needed.

**Hope you like this Newsletter. We want to improve communications and support with this format. Let us know what you think.**

### Upcoming Events

#### Upcoming Meeting Topics

09-1: Dr. Zoltan Mari, DBS Neurologist  
10-6: Becky Dunlap, RN, BSN, JHU  
11-3: Judy Barron, County Health Dept.

2012

03-1: Candice Valencia, Senior Yoga

#### Educational Activities

**Sep 26, 2011 (12:30 PM – 5:00 PM)**  
Parkinson's Disease 201: "Managing Care" -- Johns Hopkins  
Contact: 410-995-8795

**Sep 30, 2011 (2:00 PM – 3:30 PM)**  
**Dec 05, 2011 (6:00 PM – 7:30 PM)**  
Deep Brain Stimulation Information Sessions – NPF & Johns Hopkins  
Contact: 410-995-8795

**Nov 12, 2011 (8:00 AM – 4:00 PM)**  
Mid-Atlantic Parkinson's Symposium  
Martinsburg Parkinson's Support Group & Johns Hopkins  
Contact: 304-886-8594

Please let us know of any other events you would like to see publicized.

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group Contacts:

Kathy Lanham @ Homewood:  
301-582-1750

Group Facilitator, Art Guyer:  
240-625-2722

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group meets at and is supported in part by:

**HOMWOOD**  
AT WILLIAMSPORT

16505 Virginia Avenue  
Williamsport, MD 21795  
301-582-1750

**UNSUBSCRIBE:** If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please email: [aguver42@myactv.net](mailto:aguver42@myactv.net)

Or

Call: Kathy @ Homewood  
301-582-1750

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### Taking Crushed Carbidopa/ Levodopa with Juice *(From Page 1)*

Add another ounce or two of water to the glass, and swill it round the glass to pick up any remaining bits of crushed drug. Drink all of this in one mouthful.

Add another ounce of water, take the water into your mouth, slush it between your teeth, and swill it round your mouth before swallowing. This removes the acid and sugar from your mouth, to help avoid tooth decay.

As well as speeding digestion, the fruit juice adds carbohydrate to the mix, which is said to improve the action of Levodopa. It is said this method speeds absorption by about 10 minutes, and leads to a good strong 'hit'. It is also a method to use if the patient has a hard time swallowing tablets.

#### Another Option:

It is reported that an effervescent soda water such as Schweppes helps CL enter the bloodstream 10-15 minutes earlier.

This particular use for effervescent drinks is to get the tablets past any un-digested food that's still in the stomach. It sort of lifts the medication over.

Patients who have tried this indicate it works very well, provided the un-digested food doesn't have a lot of protein in it (see related protein article) and provided the patients haven't over-burdened their digestion by eating too much.

Use effervescent water that's not too cold, preferably room temperature.

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### Dry Mouth

When working at full capacity, saliva helps us talk, chew, and spit. It acts as a natural cavity-fighter by washing away food particles and plaque, and it lubricates food, works to buffer acids, and re-mineralizes teeth. Saliva is vital in maintaining a healthy mouth, so when production decreases or stops, there is more than a dry mouth to consider. Teeth and gums become more prone to decay and infection and taste buds might suffer.

Dry mouth, also called xerostomia (ZEER-oh-STOH-mee-ah), is the condition of not

having enough saliva to keep the mouth wet. Dry mouth can happen to anyone occasionally — for example, when nervous or stressed. However, when dry mouth persists, it can make chewing, eating, swallowing and even talking difficult. Dry mouth also increases the risk for tooth decay because saliva helps keep harmful germs that cause cavities and other oral infections in check.

Dry mouth can be caused by several factors; however, it is most commonly caused by the use of medications. Dehydration, radiation therapy, menopause, surgical removal of the salivary glands and cigarette smoking are also causes. Dry Mouth affects 10% of all adults and 25% of those over 65.

#### *Sorbitol (a plant-based sugar alcohol)*

Sorbitol sweetened breath mints can impact salivary flow and plaque pH in subjects suffering from xerostomia. They can effectively increase whole and parotid salivary flow rates. Additionally, the mints reduce the acidogenic effect of a 10% sucrose rinse, as measured by changes in plaque pH. The efficacy of sorbitol sweetened breath mints as a palliative (improving quality of life), and possibly therapeutic aid for individuals with xerostomia compares favorably with the results of an earlier study similarly testing the effects of sorbitol sweetened chewing gum.

Eclipse Mints are manufactured by the Wrigley Company, the famous makers of chewing gum. Wrigley first introduced Eclipse Gum in four flavors, followed by Eclipse Mints in three flavors. Eclipse Mint ingredients include sorbitol, magnesium stearate and natural and artificial flavors. Like Eclipse Gum, all Eclipse Mints are sugar-free.

#### *ACT Total Care Dry Mouth Formula*

With a mint flavor, alcohol free, sugar free ACT Total Care Dry Mouth rinse relieves dry mouth and moisturizes mouth tissue; it prevents cavities, strengthens enamel, kills bad breath germs and tastes great!

Other products are available, such as Biotin Dry Mouth Oral Rinse and a CVS Equivalent. All cost about \$9.00.

### Protein and Levodopa

What you eat and when you take your Parkinson's medication can have a major impact on the effectiveness of levodopa.

Foods loaded with protein result in a food-drug interaction between the two. This is often forgotten when taking levodopa and eating.

Protein is broken down in the intestines into amino acids. The amino acids are then absorbed through to intestinal lining into the blood. The amino acids are moved by the blood and must be "carried" across the blood brain barrier (BBB) to work. This is the same pathway levodopa takes. If all of the "carriers" are full of amino acids, then the levodopa must wait to get "carried" across the BBB. Therefore, the onset of medication can be delayed.

It is usually recommended you take levodopa approximately 1 hour prior to eating. Some foods with high protein that can be an issue are chicken, fish, red meat, eggs, brown rice, soybeans, oats, whole wheat, and peanut butter. Always read labels and, if needed, print a list of high protein foods and keep it somewhere in your kitchen.

It is not the amount of protein intake that causes this problem but rather the timing of the protein intake with respects to taking levodopa. Of course, one small bite will have less effect than a whole chicken dinner. If the levodopa is taken 1 hour before eating there should be little issue.

All proteins, regardless of source, act the same way. Also, the amount of food can also affect the effectiveness of levodopa (and other medications as well). A large meal, with or without protein, can slow the digestive process and delay the absorption of levodopa. The opposite can also happen, the smaller the meal, the quicker the absorption.

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**Want to contribute a short relevant article for the newsletter? Contact Kathy Lanham or Art Guyer.**