

# The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group

Hagerstown, MD and the Four-State Area

## Monthly Newsletter

August 2020

Visit Our Website at:  
[www.fareshare.net/Parkinsons/](http://www.fareshare.net/Parkinsons/)

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Volume 10, Issue 8

This Month's Meeting

? Meeting

**Due to the coronavirus issues at hand, none of our meetings in July will be held.**

**We will let you know about August some-time next month.**

We feel it is better to be proactive in this matter and not risk further spread of the virus. We are a high-risk population. Let's pray this will be under control soon.

To keep our communications simple, I have decided to do a one-sheet newsletter until we can get back in full swing again.

**Support Group Meetings are important.**

**Block off the first Thursday of every month on your calendars and try not to schedule anything else that day! It's just one day a month!**



On a personal note, Jan and I are still taking proper precautions here in Florida. We are staying at home; we have not been out more than a couple times over the past 6 weeks. We have been getting groceries delivered to the house and that has been working out well. When we do have to go out, we wear masks and keep our distance from others as much as possible. We hope you are doing the same – stay safe until we can be together again.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Join us for our next  
Parkinson Support Group Meeting  
at the

**Western Sizzlin' Steakhouse**  
17567 York Road, Hagerstown, MD

Sometime Soon, I Hope!

### JULY MEETING CANCELLED

### JULY CAREGIVERS MEETINGS CANCELLED

PLEASE STAY HEALTHY  
SO WE CAN MEET AGAIN

[If you are interested in viewing or participating in some of the virtual activities that are out there now, please let me know and I will put you on a special mailing list so you know what's coming up.](#)

**Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group  
Meetings in 2020**

Aug 6, Peter McMillin, Somerford, Resources  
Sep 3, Robert Lindsay, Author, Communicating  
Oct 1, Dr. Zach Levine, Neurosurgeon  
Nov 5, Shannon Murphy, Physical Therapist  
**Dec 3, Our Holiday Party! No Speaker.**

### SPOTLIGHT

**Please stay safe and follow the guidelines the medical community is promoting. Stay at home, wear masks if you do go out, wash your hands frequently and keep a proper distance from others.**

**COVID-19 affects people** in different ways. Infected people have had a wide range of symptoms reported – from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Look for emergency warning signs for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group

Group Facilitator:

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[4Parkinsons@gmail.com](mailto:4Parkinsons@gmail.com)

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



17567 York Road, Hagerstown, MD  
Stop by for lunch or dinner to support them!

Thanks to Paul Romsburg, his family, and staff of the *Western Sizzlin'* for supporting our group.

**UNSUBSCRIBE:** If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please contact the Group Facilitator, Art Guyer.

# The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group

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## Prevent Falls with 5 Warning Signs of Mobility Issues in Seniors

Mobility is essential for senior independence. But many people don't find out about their loved one's developing mobility problems until they get seriously injured in a fall. When a loved one takes a fall and breaks a hip or develops a health condition like Parkinson's disease, it's clear they'll be dealing with mobility issues – even if they're temporary. But it's not just disease or injury that leads to difficulty standing and walking. The natural effects of aging like muscle loss, balance issues, and joint stiffness all contribute to loss of mobility.

However, your loved one doesn't have to wait for a fall to find out they're developing mobility issues. There are warning signs that can indicate of potential or developing mobility problems. Being aware and noticing these signs helps you take steps to improve your loved one's balance and strength before something happens.

**1. Falling.** Even if your loved one seems to have bones of steel and never seriously hurts themselves when they fall, they could still be having mobility problems that need to be addressed before they get worse. As few as two falls in a year could indicate that something other than uneven walkways or cluttered environments is a problem.

People fall when they trip and stumble on something, but also when their feet are slow to keep up (and drag on the floor) or when they get off-balance and can't correct their body position in time. Frequent falls increase the risk for injury, hospitalization, and life-threatening complications. So even if your loved one hasn't been seriously injured (yet), fall-proofing the home with grab bars, handrails on stairs, non-slip tub mats, etc. is highly recommended. It's also important to ask their doctor to evaluate their mobility. The doctor can check for health conditions that could be causing problems, look for negative medication side effects, or recommend physical therapy to build balance and strength.

**2. Avoiding the stairs.** Is your loved one quick to say "Let's take the elevator" when you encounter even a small staircase while out and about? Do you notice them spending more time than usual downstairs in the home? Stairs can be extra tough for seniors to travel up and down because they require extra strength, balance, and energy. If your loved one seems to walk around fairly easily, but goes out of their way to limit their use of stairs, you may want to start talking with them about whether they need extra help or a mobility aid.

If they don't have any physical difficulties that are making stairs challenging, it could be that a fear of falling is holding them back. Finding ways to address those concerns will have a positive impact on their long-term mobility.

**3. Having difficulty with sitting and standing.** Is standing up from the couch a struggle for your loved one? How about lowering themselves into bed? Having trouble with sitting and standing is a strong indicator of potential mobility issues. It's an essential movement in daily life – used when eating a meal, using the restroom, upon waking and sleeping, and more.

Try the quick and simple sit-to-stand exercise with your loved one and notice if they have any difficulties. Do they need to hold on to furniture for support? Are they slow or unsteady? Being aware of a seemingly harmless warning sign like these tells you that it's necessary to talk with their doctor. You may want to ask about issues like lightheadedness or dizziness that happens when they stand up or sit down or ask about strength and balance exercises.

**4. Having trouble with balance.** Dizziness and having trouble with balance can be caused by a variety of factors including medication side effects, low blood pressure, or inner ear issues like vertigo or Meniere's disease. In addition, issues associated with normal aging like impaired vision, joint stiffness, slower reaction times, and muscle weakness reduce the body's ability to stay balanced. They can make walking, standing, and exercising difficult.

To improve mobility, your loved one's doctor can test their balance and treat underlying problems. Mobility aids like canes or walkers and targeted exercises can help a loved one with balance issues and allow them to get around more safely and confidently.

**5. Skipping exercise.** Exercise isn't everyone's favorite activity, but it's a necessary lifestyle habit that helps prevent chronic diseases and unhealthy weight gain, especially for seniors. But if your loved one is skipping exercise more and more because they're tired, sore, or simply don't have the energy, they may soon be dealing with mobility issues as well. Weakness, exhaustion, and other symptoms that keep them from exercising will make it increasingly difficult to walk or stand as much as they once did.

