

Medication Management Dilemma

By Susan Rebecca "Becky" Dunlop, RN, Johns Hopkins

My spouse who has Parkinson's Disease wants to be independent, but I am very concerned he/she is not taking the medication as prescribed. Any suggestions?

Certainly, every individual responds differently to the losses and challenges that living with Parkinson's Disease present. Proper medication management is imperative in this illness. Your spouse probably realizes that and may be fearful that he/she may need to turn over the management of his/her medication to you. This is yet another blow to his/her independence. Please know there might be a point at which you will need to manage the medication.

Suggested strategies would be:

1. Quietly, observe what your spouse is doing.
2. Write down the directions during the doctor visit and have the physician review it with you to be certain you understand.
3. Ask the patient to educate YOU on what he/she takes: how many pills and at what times.
4. Write down a schedule and list of all medications. This is also helpful at the doctor's office and many individuals hand this to the physician at each visit. It is a real time saver and improves communication. Be certain to include the name of the medication, the strength (mg, grams, etc.), the time(s) taken during the day and the route (by mouth or topical).

Additionally, there are tools like medication timers and containers that can aide compliance.

Proper management of medications ultimately leads to improved function as Parkinson's advances. Parkinson medication regimens can be very complex when a person is taking one or more medication at specific intervals during the day. As a result, there may be frustration and forgetting. The ultimate goal is to follow the physician's advice to have the benefit of improved function. So if it takes a husband and wife team to follow the doctor's advice, so be it. Two heads are always better than one!

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