

MOVEMENT DISORDERS

Amy J. Keenum, DO, PharmD, Editor

Ronald Januchowski, DO, FACOFP, Health Literacy Editor

Mana Lazzarotto, DO, Author



Movement disorders affect about 28% of the U.S. population aged 50-89. They are conditions that affect how we move. The most common movement disorder is an essential tremor. An essential tremor usually affects the hands. It is an unwanted shaking that is present at rest and worsens with movement. Your doctor can help the symptoms with medication. Another movement disorder is Parkinson's Disease, affecting 10 million people. It is caused by the brain being unable to produce a substance called dopamine. The symptoms start gradually and include tremor, which progresses to stiffening of the muscles. There may be a genetic component to Parkinson's Disease, but some people are affected without having a family history. There are medications and therapies that can help slow down the progress of the disease and symptoms; however, there is no cure.

PREVENTION:

- Since we do not know the exact causes of Parkinson's Disease, we do not know exactly how to prevent it.
- Some studies have shown that caffeine in coffee and green tea may help prevent Parkinson's Disease.
- Other studies suggest that a healthy diet and exercise can also reduce the risk of movement disorders.
- If you already have Parkinson's Disease, know that you are at higher risk of melanoma so be sure to take the appropriate precautions to protect yourself from the sun such as applying sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher and wearing protective clothing.

WHEN TO SEE YOUR DOCTOR:

- The elderly may not notice new tremors or movement changes, especially if they have dementia. If your loved one is experiencing any of the symptoms above, please schedule them to see their family physician.
- Many movement disorders also affect behavior. If you or a family member start to notice a change in your behavior that you cannot explain, make an appointment to see your family physician.
- If diagnosed with a movement disorder, your primary health care provider may send you to a specialist called a neurologist who is trained in movement and brain disorders.
- If you develop a new tremor or other changes in movement, please make an appointment to see your family physician. In case of any emergency, you should call your doctor or 911 right away.

MEDICAL CARE & TREATMENT OPTIONS:

If you have any questions about movement disorders, please contact your Osteopathic Family Physician. Your physician can answer your questions and provide you with any additional information so that you can make the best informed decision based on the benefits and risks, as well as your religious, cultural, and personal preferences. In case of any emergency, you should call your doctor or 911 right away.

SOURCE(S): *American Association of Neurologic Surgeons, Mayo Clinic, and The Lancet*

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