

12 NUTRITION TIPS



Eating nutritious foods as part of a balanced diet and maintaining a healthy weight are key for people living with Parkinson's disease (PD). By making a few small changes to your diet, you may even ease some PD symptoms. Check with your doctor before making major changes to your diet or going on a plan to lose or gain weight. Meanwhile, here are a few tips to help you eat well and stay strong:

SWITCH TO A HEALTHIER DIET

- 1 Take Small Steps:** Ease into making dietary changes. Make changes one at a time to help yourself develop healthy eating habits.
- 2 Keep It Balanced:** Select foods from all food groups, and avoid trendy diets.
- 3 Incorporate Fruits and Vegetables:** To enhance absorption of levodopa, alleviate constipation, and keep yourself energized, consider a diet that includes fresh fruits (citrus fruits, berries, kiwi, cherries) and veggies (red, yellow, orange, and dark green leafy vegetables) that are high in fiber.
- 4 Choose Antioxidant-Rich Foods:** Some research suggests you may limit damage to cells caused by free radicals by including vegetables (spinach, broccoli), fruits (berries, grapes), whole grains, beans, nuts, and dark chocolate in your diet.
- 5 Don't Forget Calcium-Rich Foods:** Milk, yogurt, kale, and sardines will help prevent fractures and keep your bones strong.
- 6 Avoid Unhealthy Fats:** Limit your intake of butter, red meat, and palm oil. Instead, choose healthy fat sources such as nuts, olive oil, avocado, and fish.

TIMING YOUR MEDS

- 7 Take Your Levodopa Before and After Meals:** Your body will absorb it faster if you take it 30-60 minutes before or after a meal.
- 8 Try Snacks With Your Meds:** To avoid nausea, eat a healthy carbohydrate snack (whole grain bread or crackers) with your levodopa.
- 9 Be Careful With Iron Supplements:** To avoid a decrease in absorption of levodopa medication, take iron supplements 2 or more hours before or after you take your medications.
- 10 Choose Protein for the Last Meal of the Day:** Have meat, fish, or cheese with your last meal of the day to minimize interference with medications, especially levodopa.

EAT TO BEAT COMMON SYMPTOMS

- 11 Relieve Constipation:** Increase your fluid intake (set a goal of six to eight 8-ounce glasses of water daily), and eat more fiber-rich foods (fruit, beans, bran) to help avoid constipation and dehydration.
- 12 Prevent Low Blood Pressure and Dizziness:** Eat smaller meals, cut your alcohol consumption, increase your water consumption, and if your doctor says it's safe for you to do so, up your salt intake.

Sources: EPDA.eu.com; michaeljfox.org; NIH.gov; parkinson.org

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