

SHCN - KINGSTON CENTRE MOVEMENT DISORDERS CLINIC

DRIVING WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Parkinson's disease symptoms that can affect driving are:-

- *reduced physical reaction time*
- *reduced reaction time with thinking response*
- *fluctuations in physical symptoms*
- *tremor*
- *fatigue*
- *coping with distractions such as radio, heavy traffic, talking to passengers*
- *problems with concentration*

Suggestions to make your driving safer and more enjoyable

- Discuss your driving ability with your doctor or therapist.
- Drive when symptoms are best controlled.
- When making longer trips, frequent rests are important. Plan in advance the route and rest breaks. Share the drive with another driver.
- Reduce distractions while driving. For example, avoid listening to the radio or talking to a passenger while driving.
- Recognise the need to concentrate when driving.
- Plan your route in advance and 'mentally rehearse' the route before commencing to drive.
- Choose a time of day to drive when traffic is lighter.
- Allow adequate time for your trip. Rushing increases stress which can have an impact on symptoms.
- Carry your next dose of medication with you in case you are away longer than expected.
- Allow extra time and distance when you break at intersections.
- Restrict night driving.
- Consider any side effects of your medication. Discuss with your neurologist the impact of your medication on driving, (eg. drowsiness, giddy feelings).
- If moving in and out of the car is difficult, discuss this with our clinic staff. Try to 'break down' this movement into simple steps. Use of a plastic bag on the seat can assist you to pivot around. Car seats could be moved back to assist getting into cars then readjusted forward to your driving position.
- Consider an application for a Disability Parking Sticker. People with Parkinson's disease often require extra room to move in and out of a car and this is available by using a disabled parking area.
- Discuss applying for a half price taxi card with your doctor.
- Arrange for regular eye check-ups.
- Consider inviting a relative or friend to accompany you periodically and discuss your driving with them.