Yoga
The practice of yoga is known to help increase flexibility and balance, and yoga may have the same effects for people with Parkinson's disease. A 2012 study found that yoga - particularly if it's adapted for the needs of patients with a movement disorder like Parkinson's disease - can increase mobility, balance, strength and flexibility. It may also help improve mood and help you sleep better.

Massage Therapy
Though not very well-studied, the effectiveness of massage in relieving side effects of Parkinson's disease, chiefly tremor, seems clear, even if that relief isn't permanent. A 2016 review of studies showed a measurable reduction in muscle rigidity and resting tremor immediately after a 60-minute massage.

Movement Therapies
Because Parkinson's disease affects balance and leads to a gradual deterioration of motor skills, certain movement therapies may help counteract those effects. The Alexander Technique, for example - a discipline that emphasizes posture and balance - may help patients with Parkinson's disease retain mobility.

Another therapy is the Feldenkrais Method, which aims to retrain the body to do difficult movements. Even if you don't participate in "official" movement therapies, acivities like dancing and strength training (lifting weights or using machines at a gym) can help alleviate some symptoms. Check with your doctor before embarking on a new exercise program.

Acupuncture
Acupuncture is a staple of traditional Chinese medicine, whose basic principle is that simulating points along the body's meridians, or energy pathways, can alleviate pain, among other positive benefits. For that reason, it's commonly used to treat Parkinson's disease in China and other countries.

Patients in the U.S. who try it often report that it helps alleviate such issues as fatigue and poor sleep. Some studies in animals have shown that acupuncture can be neuroprotective (slowing the degeneration of neurons that leads to Parkinson's disease), though those studies haven't been replicated in humans.

Source: https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/parkinsons-disease/6-medication-free-ways-to-feel-better-with-parkinsons-disease

"Believe you can and you're halfway there."

Theodore Roosevelt

September 2021

Moving Along

A newsletter of the *Waverly Area Parkinson's Disease Support Group*

September

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Parkinson's Caregiver and Support Group | Saturday, September 11
10 a.m. to Noon
Tendrils Rooftop Garden

Held the second Saturday of each month, the Parkinson's Support Group is for those who are affected or have someone close to them who is affected by this condition. This month, we will have an exercise session and divide into groups for discussion.

Park in the Red Lot and enter through the door marked "Tendrils," near the pharmacy drive-up window.

This event is free and open to all. Masks are required. Call (319) 352-4961 with questions.

Exercise Programs at The W

Delay the Disease: Exercise Program for People with PD | M, W, F | 10 to 10:50 a.m.
For more information or to sign up, call (319) 352-8311 or go to: www.the-w.org

WHC Parkinson's Singing Group

This group meets Mondays at 10 a.m. in Tendrils Rooftop Garden.

For information on how to participate, contact Kara Rewerts at (319) 483-4118 or KRewerts@WaverlyHealthenter.org

WAVERLY HEALTH CENTER

If you know of anyone who would benefit from this support group, please share this newsletter, or call (319) 352-4961.

PRIVATE FACEBOOK PAGE FOR OUR SUPPORT GROUP MEMBERS!

This provides another avenue to support and communicate with one another.

To post something or view posts, go to the Facebook page, click on groups, and ask to join the group: facebook.com/WaverlyAreaParkinsonsSupportGroup

PATHOGENS MORE ABUNDANT IN MOUTHS OF PARKINSON'S PATIENTS

Opportunistic pathogens - microorganisms that live in us all, but under specific circumstances can cause diseases like pneumonia - are more abundant in the mouths of people with Parkinson's disease (PD) than healthy individuals, a study reported.

This finding suggests that changes in oral bacteria in patients are related to disease symptoms affecting the mouth, particularly drooling and difficulty swallowing.

The study, "Oral Factors That Imapct the Oral Microbiota in Parkinson's Disease," was published in Microorganisms.

Billions of bacteria and other microorganisms live in the human body, and are especially abundant in the mouth. There are typically hundreds of different bacterial species found along the hard tissue of teeth nestled among the gums. Collectively, they are referred to as the oral microbiome.

While microbiomes play a critical part in health, they are also home to opportunistic pathogens. As their name suggests, opportunistic pathogens are not always dangerous, but under certain conditions, they can cause disease.

Oral health is known to be poorer in PD patients. Symptoms like tremor can make it difficult to floss or brush the teeth adequately, which - when combined with increased drooling and difficulty swallowing - can allow plaque to build in the mouth, forming a fertile breeding ground for bacteria.

Scientists at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston took samples of mouth bacteria from 30 people with Parkinson's disease, and similar bacteria samples from 30 healthy individuals (controls). Both groups were matched for demographic characteristics like age (averaging about 69 years), gender (about 40% female), and race (about 70% white).

To assess the oral microbiome, the researchers used a technique called 16S rRNA sequencing. This involves sequencing a specific part of the bacterial genetic code of all of the bacteria in a sample. Then, a computer sorts through the sequences to identify the different types of bacteria, based on their unique genetic codes.

Statistical analyses compared to the types of bacteria found in the mouths of people with or without PD. Patients were found to have a higher abundance of opportunistic pathogens, such as Streptococcus pneumoniae, Mycoplasma orale, and Streptococcus constellatus.

"Our results suggest that patients with PD have an oral microbiota with higher abundance of harmful bacteria compared to the controls," the researchers wrote. In particular, the team noted that S. pneumoniae, as its name implies, is a common cause of pneumonia. Aspiration pneumonia, which occurs when a person inhales food, drink, vomit, or saliva into their lungs, is a leading cause of death in PD.

In addiction to collecting bacterial samples, researchers asked patients and controls to complete a few questionnaires related to oral health.

Generally, those with PD reported poorer oral health, including more plaque accumulation and more problems with drooling or swallowing. However, oral hygiene habits did not differ significantly between the two groups, and researchers did not note any differences in efficiency of tooth brushing.

This finding "supports the hypotehsis that poor oral health [in PD patients] is not due to reduced frequency or efficiency of oral hygiene, but rather is releated to disease-specific factors that result in increased abundance of [bacteria] known to incite oral disease," the researchers wrote.

Researchers also looked for connections between factors from these questionnaires and notable changes in the oral microbiome. They noted that dysphagia (trouble swallowing) and excess drooling both were associated with significant changes in the microbiome. In particular, PD patients with dysphagia had a notably increased abundance of S. pneumoniae.

"Our findings suggest that oral-releated symptoms of PD may influence the oral microbiota and account for some of the differences observed when compared to control subjects," the scientists wrote. "By preventing aspiration pneumonia, the main cause of death in this patient population, the oral microbiota may prove to be a noninvasive, inexpensive, and life-saving biomarker."
Source: https://parkinsonsnewstoday.com/2021/08/04/parkinsons-patients-more-oral-pathogens-opportunistic-bacteria-mouth/

6 MEDICATION-FREE WAYS TO FEEL BETTER WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Medication aside, there are many ways people living with Parkinson's disease can improve their health and well-being, preserve physical function, ease symptoms and enhance quality of life. Chief among these are getting regular exercise, eating a healthy diet, staying hydrated and getting an adequate amount of sleep.

But what about nontraditional therapy? Integrative thearpies, such as yoga, massage, dietary supplements and various movement techniques, have prompted research over the years to determine if they have a role to play in the treatment of Parkinson's disease. Although the jury is mostly still out on some of them, there is still quite a bit of promise to many nonmedical approaches to care.

Nutritional Supplements

You may have heard that the antioxidant coenzyme Q10, or Co-Q10, may improve Parkinson's disease. However, the National Institute of Neurological Disrders and Stroke halted a study in 2011 investigating the effectiveness of Co-Q10 when it became clear that the purported protective benefits didn't differ from a placebo.

For this and other reasons, it's wise to ask your doctor if you're thinking of trying a supplement - and you should never stop taking your medication.

One supplement that may have benefits for people with Parkinson's disease is calcium, largely because so many calcium-rich foods (such as dairy products) are also high in protein, which may interfere with the absorption of your medications.

Tai Chi

This form of exercise promotes balance and coordination, so it stands to reason that it would be beneficial for patients with Parkinson's disease. A 2012 study of three forms of exercise - resistance training, stretching, and tai chi - found that tai chi offered measurable improvement in balance and stability in people who had moderate Parkinson's disease.