

Many people with mid-stage to advanced PD experience “freezing.” *Freezing* is the temporary, involuntary inability to move. Not all people with PD experience *freezing* episodes, but those who do have a greater risk of falling. The problem can occur at any time, and some people are more prone to *freezing* episodes than others. Usually, *freezing* only lasts a few seconds.

What is *freezing*?

- It may feel like your feet are stuck in place, or it may be difficult to get up from a chair.
- *Freezing* may also affect other parts of the body or your speech.

What causes *freezing*?

- The cause of *freezing* is unknown.
- In patients that experience it, *freezing* mostly happens when they are having an “off” period or are due for their next dose of dopaminergic medication.

What situations can trigger a *freezing* episode?

- *Freezing* episodes can happen at any time but tend to happen more often when you are initiating or starting to move (i.e. standing to walking).
- You are more likely to have *freezing* episodes when you are walking through doorways, turning a corner, turning around, or stepping from one type of surface to another type (i.e. tile to carpet).
- Multi-tasking, stopping, or slowing down your pace while walking can also trigger an episode.
- You may also have more *freezing* during stressful situations or when surrounded by crowds.

Why is *freezing* dangerous?

- There is a danger of falling because the beginning and the end of these episodes are unpredictable.
- The unpredictability coupled with efforts by well-meaning companions to force the person to move may cause the person with Parkinson’s disease to lose balance and fall

How can I better manage *freezing* episodes?

- If you are having *freezing* episodes, tell your doctor. Adjusting your treatment may be helpful.
- Ask your doctor about physical therapy. Physical therapists trained in Parkinson’s disease can teach you techniques that reduce your risk of falling.
- Ask your doctor about occupational therapy. An occupational therapist can help you to minimize the risk of falls in your home.

Are there tricks that might help me get moving again?

Many patients may notice that different tricks help to alleviate a freezing episode. They include:

- Being aware of *freezing* triggers and preparing strategies in advance.
- Marching or goose stepping (swinging the leg high and parallel to the ground with knees locked)
- Shifting the weight of the body from one leg to another
- Listening to music and stepping with the rhythm (wearing a radio or mp3 player can be helpful)
- Humming, singing, or counting
- Imagining a line to step over or focusing on a target on the floor to step on
- Using a mobile laser device to create a line in front of you to step over
- Turn by walking half a circle or square instead of by a pivot turn

How can a friend or family member help me during this time?

- Remain calm. Do not rush or push the individual during a *freezing* episode.
- Wait patiently for several seconds to see if the episode passes.
- If the person is unable to move without assistance, try placing your foot perpendicular to the person and ask them to step over it.
- Help rock the person from side to side.
- Encourage the individual to try marching or counting
- Ask the doctor about physical therapy and/or occupational therapy