

Risk Factors for Psychosis in People with Parkinson's

Not everyone with Parkinson's will develop hallucinations or delusions, but there are several things that can increase your risk. You and your caregiver(s) should be aware of the risk factors below and report any changes you experience to your medical team.

Medications

- New medications
- Changes in existing medications (e.g., a change in your Sinemet dose)
- Use of over-the-counter (OTC) medications like Benadryl, aspirin or ibuprofen

Dementia

People who experience severe decline in memory and thinking are also more likely to develop psychosis.

Sleep disorder

- REM behavior disorder
- Vivid dreaming
- Sleep apnea
- Sleep interruptions

If you are affected by one or more of the above sleep disturbances, you may be at greater risk for psychosis.

Vision problems Parkinson's can cause changes to a person's vision, making it difficult to distinguish objects. Therefore, people with Parkinson's may need more light to see well. Some people experience double and/or blurred vision. These changes may increase your risk for hallucinations or illusions.

Hearing problems Like vision problems, hearing impairment should be addressed, as it increases the risk of auditory hallucinations.

Age Older people are more likely to be affected by hallucinations and/or delusions due to visual difficulties that occur with normal aging (e.g., blurred vision, loss of peripheral vision, and problems with depth perception).

Disease progression As Parkinson's advances, motor and non-motor symptoms alike begin to have a greater impact on quality of life. As part of this progression, there is also an increased chance of developing psychosis.

As with many symptoms, some people will experience psychosis and others will not. Being aware of the warning signs and risk factors will help you to be prepared.