

# Depression, Anxiety and Apathy in Parkinson's

## Disease Can Parkinson's Disease Affect Mood?

Yes, Parkinson's disease (PD) can lead to a variety of non-motor symptoms, in addition to the typical movement issues. Mood disturbances are common and can often be just as impactful, or even more so, than motor symptoms for some individuals, significantly affecting their overall quality of life.

## What Are the Common Mood Symptoms in PD?

The most frequently observed mood-related issues in PD include depression, anxiety, and apathy:

- **Depression:** This involves a persistently low mood, feelings of sadness or hopelessness, and sometimes a sense of emptiness or guilt.
- **Anxiety:** This refers to a heightened sense of nervousness, tension, worry, or unease. People with anxiety may also experience panic attacks or intense fears.
- **Apathy:** Characterized by a lack of interest or motivation to engage in activities or interact with others.

## When Do Mood Symptoms Occur?

Mood issues can emerge at any stage of Parkinson's disease. Some individuals experience mood changes even before the onset of motor symptoms, while others may notice them years into the condition. Additionally, mood fluctuations can sometimes be linked to the effects of dopaminergic medications.

## How Can I Recognize Mood Symptoms?

In addition to classic symptoms such as low energy and fatigue, depression and anxiety may be accompanied by a decreased appetite, trouble sleeping, withdrawal from social situations, reduced participation in family events or activities.

However, these issues can also occur independently, so having them doesn't always indicate depression. Often, family members or close friends may notice mood changes before the affected individual does. Common signs include:

## Why Do Mood Symptoms Occur?

Parkinson's disease may affect key neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin, and noradrenaline, which are associated with mood regulation. Additionally, your emotional response to living with the disease, as well as some social and psychological factors, may contribute to these mood symptoms.

## How Are Mood Symptoms Treated in PD?

Several treatment options are available for managing mood disturbances in Parkinson's disease:

- **Medications:** Antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications can be prescribed to help manage symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- **Dopamine medications:** Drugs used to improve motor symptoms may also help alleviate mood issues, particularly when they are linked to changes in medication schedules.
- **Psychotherapy:** Counseling or therapy can be effective in addressing both depression and anxiety.

- **Lifestyle changes:** Structured activities, regular exercise, and social interaction can help reduce feelings of apathy.
- **Sleep and stress management:** Ensuring adequate rest, having strong social support, and minimizing stress can improve mood symptoms.