



Traveling With Parkinson's Disease

Planning Ahead to Travel Safely, Comfortably, and With Confidence

Travel can be restorative, meaningful, and empowering—but Parkinson's disease adds layers of planning that can feel daunting. The good news is that **many people with Parkinson's travel successfully**—for work, family, medical care, and enjoyment—by anticipating needs and building flexibility into their plans.

Through the **Wisconsin Parkinson Association**, individuals are encouraged to approach travel as a skill that can be adapted over time—not an activity that must be avoided.

Parkinson's may change how you travel—not whether you can travel.

Why Travel Can Feel More Challenging With Parkinson's

Travel places extra demands on:

- Energy and endurance
- Mobility and balance
- Medication timing
- Cognition and multitasking
- Sleep and routine

Symptoms may fluctuate with fatigue, time-zone changes, long lines, or unfamiliar environments—but planning ahead reduces surprises.

Before You Go: Smart Planning Makes the Difference

Choose the Right Pace

- Allow extra time between connections and activities

- Avoid over-packed itineraries
- Build in rest days for longer trips

Traveling slower often means traveling farther.

Review Medications & Medical Needs

- Carry medications in original containers
- Pack extra doses in case of delays
- Bring a written medication list and schedule
- Consider a medical information card or bracelet

If traveling internationally, check regulations for medications ahead of time.

Talk With Your Care Team

Before longer trips, discuss:

- Medication timing adjustments
 - Managing “on/off” periods while traveling
 - Motion sickness or sleep concerns
 - Emergency planning
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Packing Tips That Support Comfort & Safety

Helpful items may include:

- Comfortable, supportive footwear
- Mobility aids if used at home
- Compression stockings for long travel days
- Snacks and hydration supplies
- Written itineraries and reminders

Packing for Parkinson’s is about preparation—not pessimism.

Air Travel With Parkinson's

Airport Assistance Is Your Right

- Request wheelchair or mobility assistance in advance
- Use early boarding when available
- Allow extra time for security screening

These supports reduce fatigue and fall risk.

Medication Timing & Flights

- Keep medications in your carry-on
- Set alarms for dosing across time zones
- Avoid skipping doses during long flights

Road Trips & Train Travel

Helpful strategies include:

- Planning frequent stops to move and stretch
- Avoiding driving during medication “off” times
- Sharing driving responsibilities when possible
- Keeping essentials easily accessible

Regular movement prevents stiffness and fatigue.

Hotels & Accommodations

When booking, consider:

- Elevator access
- Walk-in showers or grab bars
- Proximity to dining and rest areas

- Quiet rooms for better sleep

Calling ahead to request accessibility features can prevent stress on arrival.

Managing Fatigue While Traveling

Fatigue is one of the most common travel challenges.

Helpful approaches include:

- Scheduling rest breaks throughout the day
- Choosing seated activities when possible
- Staying hydrated and nourished
- Prioritizing sleep—even if schedules shift

Protecting energy preserves enjoyment.

Navigating Mobility & Balance in New Environments

Unfamiliar settings may increase fall risk.

Helpful steps include:

- Scanning environments before moving
- Using handrails and stable surfaces
- Avoiding rushing in crowded areas
- Using mobility aids if helpful

Confidence grows with preparation and patience.

Traveling With a Companion or Care Partner

If traveling with someone:

- Share medication schedules
- Discuss support needs in advance
- Build in independent rest time for both people

Clear communication prevents misunderstandings and fatigue.

Emotional & Confidence Considerations

Traveling with Parkinson's can bring:

- Anxiety about symptoms
- Worry about public visibility
- Fear of inconvenience

These feelings are common. Support, experience, and self-compassion help rebuild confidence.

You deserve to participate fully in life—including travel.

When to Reconsider or Modify Travel Plans

It may be wise to adjust plans if:

- Symptoms are unstable
- Recent falls or illness occurred
- Medication changes are ongoing
- Fatigue is severe

Modifying a trip is not failure—it is self-care.

Living Fully—Wherever You Go

Travel may look different with Parkinson's, but it can still bring connection, meaning, and joy.

The destination matters—but so does how you care for yourself along the way.

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