



WISCONSIN PARKINSON

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Hope in Every Smile

Insights from Brewers pitcher

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Staying Safe This Winter:
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How to Leave a Legacy That Lasts

Including the Wisconsin Parkinson Association in your will or estate plan is one of the most meaningful ways to support people living with Parkinson's. It allows your values to live on, helping future generations access the care, connection, and resources they deserve.

Legacy giving is not complicated, and it is not only for the wealthy. Anyone can make a lasting impact.

Here's how you can make a difference:

- **Add WPA to your will:** You can leave a specific amount or percentage of your estate.
- **Name WPA as a beneficiary:** This can be done with retirement accounts, life insurance policies, or bank accounts.
- **Work with your financial advisor:** They can help you choose the option that fits best with your goals.
- **Tell us about your gift:** When you share your plans, we can thank you and make sure your wishes are clearly understood.

Every legacy gift supports local programs, support groups, education, and advocacy. It helps ensure that no one faces Parkinson's alone.

This kind of gift is a message of hope. It is a promise that care, connection, and hope will always be there for those who need it most.



To learn more, visit wiparkinson.org

Letter from the *President & CEO*

"I smile as I reflect on our latest partnership. It's only fitting, because Jacob Misorowski, 'The Miz,' reminds us all to find hope in a smile."

Dear Friends of WPA,

What an incredible year we've had together! It's been one filled with growth, connection, and hope! Each step forward has allowed us to extend our reach, bringing life-changing programming and opportunities to communities throughout the state. Our unwavering commitment to making a deeper impact means we're not just increasing the number of programs, we're forging meaningful relationships, touching more lives, and building a stronger, more supportive network for everyone affected by Parkinson's here in Wisconsin.



Jacob Misorowski and the WPA team.

I smile as I reflect on our latest partnership. It's only fitting, because Jacob Misorowski, "The Miz," reminds us all to find hope in a smile. It's a message his father has impressed upon him as he grew up. We are truly honored to welcome Jacob, a talented young pitcher for the Milwaukee Brewers and an extraordinary advocate for our cause, into our WPA family. Jacob's personal experience with Parkinson's, as he witnesses his father's courage and resilience, fuels his

passion for spreading awareness and offering hope. His kindness and dedication inspire us all to keep pushing forward, and we're proud to have him championing the WPA mission!

This edition also shines a spotlight on another remarkable "pitcher," Ken Pipping, whose story, together with his wife Lil, uplifts and reminds us of the power of perseverance and love, even in the face of adversity. Their journey is a testament to the strength found in community and support.

We're also excited to offer a medical focus in this issue, featuring insightful articles from experienced providers closely connected to WPA. Their wisdom and expertise are invaluable, and we are fortunate to learn from such passionate professionals. We hope these articles inspire confidence and comfort as you navigate your Parkinson's journey.

Please remember that you are never alone, and that together, we can achieve extraordinary things.

Keep smiling,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly".



Kelly Cieslak, MBA, President & CEO
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SMILE!

Hope in Every Donation

Every dollar counts toward making sure that no one faces Parkinson's alone, and that vital information and support are always within reach.



Every day, 20,000+ individuals and families across Wisconsin face the challenges of Parkinson's disease. Wisconsin Parkinson Association is dedicated to improving the quality of life for those affected through educational programs, support groups, and advocacy.

Parkinson's disease doesn't just impact the individual, it touches families, friends, and entire communities. In Jacob Misiowski's family, he watches his father show resilience and optimism, greeting each day with a joke, a smile, and an unwavering spirit. This attitude became a guiding light for Jacob, teaching him to meet adversity with hope and courage, life lessons that extend far beyond the baseball field.

Just as Jacob's strength is rooted in his father's example, the strength of our community comes from the compassion and generosity of supporters like you. Your donation allows us to continue providing essential services, helping people navigate their journey with Parkinson's and empowering them to live life to the fullest, with hope in their hearts and a smile on their faces.

Your support of the Wisconsin Parkinson Association funds vital programs for people with Parkinson's and their caregivers, along with community outreach that builds awareness and inspires hope. Every dollar counts toward making sure that no one faces Parkinson's alone, and that vital information and support are always within reach. Your gift becomes part of a larger story, one that echoes Jacob and his father's legacy of courage, compassion, and optimism.

Now more than ever, your generosity is needed. With your help, we can continue to expand our programs, reach more people, and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those living with Parkinson's disease throughout Wisconsin.

Please consider making a donation today. Go to wiparkinson.org for more information, use Venmo: @WIParkinson or scan the QR code to donate.



A Pitch for Hope:

Ken and Lil Pipping's Journey with Parkinson's

Both Ken and Lil recognize the powerful role of support groups, not just for those with Parkinson's but for caregivers too. Open conversations allow people to share struggles, seek advice, and realize they're not alone in their journey.



For Ken and Lil Pipping, life is a blend of perseverance, community, and love, qualities that shine through their experiences living with Parkinson's disease. Their story reflects the challenges and triumphs that come from facing Parkinson's together and finding ways to inspire those around them.

Ken, now 83, was diagnosed with Parkinson's about 20 years ago. The journey to diagnosis presented its own challenges, but over time, Ken was able to connect with a physician whose compassionate and communicative approach brought comfort and reassurance. For Ken and Lil, having medical professionals who offer empathy and understanding has been invaluable, not only for managing symptoms, but also for ensuring they feel supported throughout their journey.

Their involvement with Wisconsin Parkinson Association has opened doors to support and connection. Ken and Lil have attended symposiums, presentations, and local support groups, sometimes braving heavy construction along the way or getting an early start and missing breakfast. No matter the route or timing of getting to their destination, they always find value in the connections and conversations. Ken and Lil were instrumental in starting a Parkinson's support group at Generations in Plymouth, helping others find community and resources. "The more you talk about it, the more people realize they're not alone," Lil says.

Ken's participation reached a new high this past August when he was selected to throw out the first pitch at a Brewers game—an afternoon with special significance, as the Brewers were breaking their record for consecutive wins. The opportunity came thanks to his facility director,

who submitted Ken's name among 300 entries from residents at Waterford. Surrounded by family, staff, and cheering fans, Ken walked out to the mound, supported by caregivers and the facility team. "I was so proud of him," Lil recalls. "Not everybody gets that chance. It was magical."



Despite Parkinson's challenges, and giving up hobbies like fishing, hunting, and golf, Ken remains active. He focuses on strengthening his legs and ankles, experimenting with new ways to stay engaged. Alongside Lil, he brings joy and wisdom to his assisted living community, offering support to fellow residents, caregivers, and staff. "If I can help someone, I will," Ken says, emphasizing the importance of sharing experiences and building each other up.

Both Ken and Lil recognize the powerful role of support groups, not just for those with Parkinson's but for caregivers too.

Open conversations allow people to share struggles, seek advice, and realize they're not alone in their journey. Lil candidly admitted that asking for help was difficult at first. She realized asking for help and accepting it was ultimately necessary, which is a reminder for all of us that vulnerability can lead to growth and resilience.

Ken and Lil's marriage is a testament to living out vows through good times and bad. "Take every day as it comes. Remember to tell each other you love them, because you never know what tomorrow's going to bring," Lil says. Their story is not just about managing a disease, but about building hope, staying connected, and uplifting their community. As Ken and Lil demonstrate, even in the face of adversity, there's always room for joy—and sometimes, for throwing a pitch that makes history.



Falls Prevention and Parkinson's Disease

By: Dr. Mushir Hassan, Chief Medical Officer with Network Health

Parkinson's disease and different parkinsonism-like diseases impacts the central nervous system which significantly impairs motor skills. Falls are caused by a combination of motor, sensory, and cognitive impairments, as well as environmental and social factors. Many people may need assistance from others, use crutches or wheelchairs when moving around.

Approximately 70 percent of Parkinson's patients have at least one fall annually, which can lead to serious injuries, particularly hip fractures or head trauma. Additionally, individuals diagnosed with different parkinsonism-like diseases are at a higher risk of falling compared to those with Parkinson's. Identifying risk factors is very important for the prevention of falls.

Risk factors for falls related to Parkinson's

- Low B12 vitamin level
- Taking multiple medications simultaneously
- Taking multiple medications that mimic dopamine
- Cognitive impairment
- Duration of the disease >10 years
- Arthrosis
- Freezing of gait

What's that? Freezing of gait can be defined as a brief episodic absence or marked reduction of forward progression of the feet despite the intention to walk. This has a strong association with falling.

Approximately 70 percent of Parkinson's patients have at least one fall annually, which can lead to serious injuries, particularly hip fractures or head trauma.



So, what can be done to help reduce the risk for falls?

- Regular checkups with physicians to ensure vitamin levels have been checked and medication lists have been reviewed to reduce unnecessary medications, are a good start.
- An assessment of bone density is another important part of the checkup. Low bone density can be a risk for fractures due to osteoporosis.
- Discussions about regular physical activity with assistive devices to add stability are also important.
- Sensible regular exercise is key to preventing a backslide into progressive weakness.
- Some medications may also be beneficial, reducing fall risk and increasing activity levels.
- Physicians may also prescribe a comprehensive rehabilitative assessment by a trained physical therapist.

Modifying your home environment is also helpful.

- Remove rugs and potential obstacles.
- Install grab bars in key areas in which falls are more likely, such as the bathroom.
- Choose the right shoes for you: some like rubber soles and some do better with leather soles; check that shoes are not loose-fitting and provide support. Wear shoes with a slight heel to reduce falling backwards. Avoid high heels.
- Wear a medical alert bracelet or pendant in case a

fall does occur. Consider other home monitoring systems with motion detection and/or video.

A simple guide to assistive devices includes the following:

- **Basic walker** – this is usually just a metal frame without wheels
- **Wheeled walker** – a metal frame with wheels. The wheels may be on two or four legs and the wheels may swivel or be fixed
- **Rollator** – a walker with swivel wheels on all four legs and hand brakes. The brakes typically need to be engaged for the walker to stop. Often the rollator has a seat and a basket for convenience.
- **U-Step walker** – designed specifically with the concerns of people with Parkinson's in mind, particularly freezing of gait. The U-step walker has a reverse braking system which means that without engaging anything, the walker is in the braked position and the wheels will not turn. A lever must be gripped or pressed for the wheels to turn. Therefore, if freezing of gait occurs, the walker should stay stable. The walker can be ordered with a laser light and/or a sound cueing module which can be used to interrupt a freeze.

Considering the measures above and ensuring that caregivers are aware of available resources and options is vital to reducing fall risk. Physician-directed assistive devices may also be covered by your health plan with a physician order.

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<https://www.apdaparkinson.org/article/impaired-balance-falls-and-parkinsons-disease/>

ALWAYS
SMILE

Jacob Misiowski's Fight for Families Facing Parkinson's



When Jacob Misiowski stepped onto the mound for his Major League pitching debut, the moment felt electric. His fastball had bite. His focus was unshakable. Years of hard work had led to this point, and behind every pitch was a deeper story. A story rooted in Missouri, where a boy first learned to love the game from a father who, for more than a decade, has been living with Parkinson's disease.

Jacob was thirteen when his father, Tom, was diagnosed. At first, he didn't fully understand what it meant.



"I was mostly just confused," he says. But as time passed, the disease revealed itself. Simple tasks grew harder. Playing catch became more difficult and Jacob began to see how something invisible could slowly alter everything.

It was this journey that brought Jacob to the Wisconsin Parkinson Association. As a new face in the majors, he knew he wanted to use his platform for good. WPA became the perfect partner. "I may never meet all the people I'm helping," he says, "but knowing I can make a difference in their lives still means a lot."

There are more than 20,000 people living with Parkinson's in Wisconsin. WPA is here, offering support groups, exercise classes, educational tools, and resources for both individuals and families navigating the challenges of Parkinson's. For Jacob, it felt

"'After a rough day,' Jacob says, 'having my dad say something off the wall, dumb, that he just knows is going to get a smile out of me... it helps a lot.'"

deeply personal. It was not just about raising awareness but about honoring the way his family kept showing up for each other, day after day.

His mom, Crystal, has been at the heart of that. She manages appointments, keeps life moving, and makes sure their home is still filled with projects, laughter, and light. Together, they have built a life that defies the limitations of the diagnosis. Friends and extended family have rallied too, reminding Jacob that Parkinson's may be present, but it does not get the final say.



One of the most enduring lessons came not from treatment plans or medical updates, but from something far simpler: the way his dad carried himself through it all. No matter how the day began or how hard it became, Tom greeted it with a joke. A wisecrack. A grin.

And that made an impression that stuck.

"He taught me to smile. Always smile," Jacob says.

That smile became a kind of armor, a way to meet the world not by pretending the hard things are not real, but by insisting that joy still belongs in the story. Jacob carries that same spirit to the mound. Baseball comes with pressure, with eyes watching, with moments that can feel impossibly big. When it gets overwhelming, he thinks of his dad's grin. He thinks of home.

"After a rough day," Jacob says, "having my dad say something off the wall, dumb, that he just knows is going to get a smile out of me... it helps a lot."

Now, through his partnership with WPA, Jacob is doing more than honoring his dad. He is helping build hope for thousands of families across Wisconsin. Families just like his. Families learning to adapt, to persevere, to hold on tight to each other.

For Jacob, this is not about obligation. It is about legacy. Every game he pitches, every chance he gets to speak out, is an opportunity to give someone else what his family has held onto all along: strength, connection, and a reason to smile.



Pitching in for Parkinson's

On September 15, fans filled the Uecker Room at American Family Field for a special ball signing event with Jacob Misiowski, benefiting the Wisconsin Parkinson Association. Each ticket included a signed, authenticated baseball and a professional photo, but the real highlight was the connection.



Jacob didn't just sign baseballs — he listened to stories, met families, and reminded everyone there that they are not alone in the fight against Parkinson's. The event raised vital funds for WPA's programs and gave attendees an afternoon to remember.

"Jacob's passion for this cause is as powerful as his arm," said WPA's President and CEO, Kelly Cieslak. "He understands the toll Parkinson's can take on a family, and he's stepping up to help others walking the same path. His support will help raise awareness for Parkinson's, amplify our mission, and expand our reach throughout the state of Wisconsin and beyond. We couldn't be more excited for this partnership!"

Staying Safe This Winter:

Managing Your Environment



As the seasons shift and cold weather sets in, winter brings added risks for people living with Parkinson's. Ice, snow, and slippery surfaces can increase the chances of falling—and for those with balance or mobility challenges, a fall can lead to serious injury and a loss of confidence.

The good news is that falls are not inevitable. With a few practical adjustments and some simple preparation, you can stay safe, steady, and active through the winter months.

Choose the Right Footwear

Good traction starts with your shoes. Footwear should have non-slip soles, good ankle support, and a snug but comfortable fit. Avoid smooth or worn-out soles that can easily slide on ice or snow.

For icy conditions, consider using ice cleats or other traction devices that fit over your boots. These add grip when walking outdoors but should be removed

immediately when stepping inside to avoid slipping on hard floors.

Be Smart About Mobility Aids

If you use a cane, walker, or other mobility device, make sure it's winter-ready. A cane can be fitted with an ice grip attachment that digs into snow or ice. Walkers should have large wheels with good tread, and all devices should be checked regularly for wear and tear.

Make sure your aid is stable on uneven surfaces and won't skid or sink into snow. If you're unsure whether your current device is appropriate for winter use, consult your physical therapist for guidance.

Prepare Your Entryways

Many winter falls happen right inside the doorway. Snow and slush tracked indoors can make tile and wood floors slippery.

If you must go outside, preparation is key. Check the weather forecast before you leave, and avoid going out during icy or stormy conditions whenever possible.



Place heavy-duty mats both outside and inside each entrance. Keep towels or boot trays handy to dry off wet shoes right away. Consider removing shoes at the door to avoid spreading moisture throughout your home. If you use a walker or cane indoors, make sure rubber tips are dry before continuing on.

Light Your Path

In winter, shorter days mean more time in low light. Make sure your home is well-lit, especially in stairwells, hallways, and entryways.



Use night lights in bedrooms and bathrooms so you can navigate safely if you wake during the night. Replace dim or burned-out bulbs and consider motion-sensor lighting for extra convenience.

Remove Hazards Inside

Before winter begins, take time to clear potential tripping hazards from your home. Remove loose rugs or secure them with non-slip backing. Clear walkways of cords, shoes, or clutter. Keep commonly used items within easy reach to reduce the need for bending or climbing.

Falls often happen when you're doing something quickly or unexpectedly, like reaching for something on a high shelf or answering the phone, so make sure your space supports safe movement.

Plan Before You Go Out

If you must go outside, preparation is key. Check the weather forecast before you leave, and avoid going out during icy or stormy conditions whenever possible.

Give yourself plenty of time to get where you're going so you don't feel rushed. Walk slowly and take shorter steps to stay balanced. Use handrails when available, and don't hesitate to ask for assistance from a friend or family member.

If you're carrying anything, keep one hand free to steady yourself. Backpacks or shoulder bags are safer than carrying items in your arms.

Keep Moving, Even Indoors

During winter, it's common to stay indoors more often. While this may help avoid icy sidewalks, it can lead to stiffness or muscle loss that increases fall risk.

Keep up with physical therapy exercises, stretching routines, or seated workouts that focus on strength, balance, and flexibility. If possible, continue participating in movement programs like boxing, dance, or yoga designed for people with Parkinson's. Staying active helps you maintain confidence and reduce your risk of falling, even if you don't leave the house as often.

Confidence Comes from Preparation

Living with Parkinson's means being aware of your environment and your body's needs, but it doesn't mean you have to live in fear of falling. With the right tools, smart habits, and a bit of planning, winter can be manageable.



For more fall prevention resources or to connect with local support groups and mindful movement classes, visit wiparkinson.org.

Spotlight:

Dr. Brian Nagle's Journey and Vision for Parkinson's Care in Wisconsin

By: Brian Nagle, MD, MPH, UW Health, Madison, and WPA Medical Advisory Committee Member



Dr. Brian Nagle, MD, MPH, brings enthusiasm, expertise, and a spirit of collaboration to the Wisconsin Parkinson Association (WPA). In this spotlight Dr. Nagle shares insights into his journey toward becoming a movement disorder specialist, his experiences with WPA, and his vision for the future of Parkinson's care in Wisconsin.

Dr. Nagle's path to neurology was shaped by personal experience; his grandmother's struggle with Alzheimer's inspired him to pursue work with patients with dementia and neurodegenerative diseases. He explained, "Because of watching my grandmother deal with this disease, I knew that I wanted to work with this population - in particular, people with dementia."

While training at Georgetown, mentorship and exposure to movement disorder specialists sparked his interest in the specialty. He discovered the diversity and impact of clinical practices, from patient care to advanced therapies and deep brain stimulation programming. "Movement disorders seemed pretty cool, that's what I wanted to do," Dr. Nagle recalled when reflecting on how he chose his specialty.

Since becoming involved with WPA, Dr. Nagle has found great value in collaborating with fellow specialists across the state through the Medical Advisory Committee. This collaboration enables the sharing of resources and knowledge, such as learning about procedures available at other Wisconsin centers and providing new options for patient referrals. Dr. Nagle emphasizes the importance of these connections for continuity of care and innovation in treatment: "It's a chance to collaborate with other movement disorder

specialists across the state. We all have the same goal in mind, but we can work with each other to figure out how best to care for our patients."

Dr. Nagle shares his expertise with WPA by contributing to the magazine, supporting events for newly diagnosed patients and participating as a member on the Medical Advisory Committee. He also values interdisciplinary conferences such as the Spring Symposium, noting how insights from physical and speech therapists enhance patient care. He shared, "Working with skilled speech and physical therapists improves our patient care. Their expertise enriches our conferences and helps me better understand and support patients during therapy."

When meeting patients newly diagnosed with Parkinson's, Dr. Nagle stresses hope and patience. He reassures them that today's treatments offer many options, and ongoing research continues to bring new therapies. "I always want people to walk away knowing that there are options down the

line," he says. Dr. Nagle's advice empowers patients to look forward with optimism as they begin their journey. He adds, "To instill hope and patience, we must focus not only on what we have right now, but also be mindful of what lies ahead."

Outside of medicine, Dr. Nagle unwinds by gardening, finding parallels between nurturing plants and fostering hope in his patients. His dedication to collaboration and compassionate care makes him a vital voice in Wisconsin's Parkinson's community.



Building Your Parkinson's Care Team:

Key Roles for Support and Independence

By: Brian Nagle, MD, MPH, UW Health, Madison,
and WPA Medical Advisory Committee Member



Since PD affects more than just the brain, your Primary Care Provider (PCP) can help manage symptoms such as constipation, fatigue, sleep issues, or lightheadedness, and make sure nothing else is contributing to the symptoms.

Having the right team when living with Parkinson's disease can make all the difference. When you're first diagnosed, it helps to know who should be on your healthcare team and how they can support you.

Physical Therapy (PT)

Physical therapists are experts at helping with movement. Many people see PT when walking or balance starts to change. Therapists teach exercises that encourage BIG movements to fight the small, slow steps common in PD. PT is also the main treatment for balance issues and helps you stay active, since exercise protects brain health. Because PD changes over time, you'll likely check in with PT once or twice a year to learn new ways to stay safe and reduce fall risk.

Speech Therapy

Speech therapists do more than help with soft speech. They also work on slurred speech, word-finding difficulties, and thinking skills. If swallowing becomes harder, speech therapists evaluate swallowing and help reduce choking or coughing when eating, drinking, or taking medications.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

OT focuses on everyday life. They help you find easier ways to manage tasks like dressing, cooking, or writing. Sometimes they also work on memory and thinking skills, offering tools and exercises that make daily routines more manageable.

Primary Care Provider (PCP)

Your PCP plays an important role alongside your neurologist. Since PD affects more than just the brain, your

PCP can help manage symptoms such as constipation, fatigue, sleep issues, or lightheadedness, and make sure nothing else is contributing to the symptoms.

Neurologist or Movement Disorders Specialist

Your neurologist, or a specialist in movement disorders, usually coordinates your overall PD care. They'll work with your PCP and other providers. It's good to ask which parts of your care they will manage directly and which ones your PCP will handle.

Other Specialists

Because PD can affect many parts of the body, you may also need doctors like a urologist, gastroenterologist, or cardiologist at different times.

Family Members

Most caregiving in the U.S. is provided by family, and their support is invaluable. At the same time, caregivers need care too. Support groups, both local and online, are available to help family members cope with the challenges of caregiving.

Community Members

Support doesn't stop at home. Friends, neighbors, coworkers, and faith communities can also be wonderful sources of encouragement. Sharing a PD diagnosis can feel difficult, but many people find that, when they do, it results in kindness, empathy, and even learning about others' personal connections to PD.

Your healthcare team, together with family and community, is here to help you manage symptoms and keep your independence for as long as possible.



Metabolism of Levodopa by Gut Bacteria Lowers Brain Dopamine

By: Balaraman (Raman) Kalyanaraman, PhD
Department of Biophysics, Medical College of Wisconsin

Introduction

When we think about Parkinson's disease (PD), we usually focus on the brain, especially the loss of dopamine, a chemical messenger that controls movement. What's less well known is that the gut, home to trillions of microbes, also plays an important role in how PD develops and how well medications like levodopa work.

Levodopa remains the most effective treatment for PD motor symptoms. Levodopa, which is taken orally, is converted into dopamine in the brain, helping reduce tremors, stiffness, and slowness. But here's the challenge: less than 10% of the drug patients swallow actually reaches the brain. The rest is lost during digestion, which forces patients to take higher doses over time, increasing the risk of side effects.

Gut bacteria and levodopa

Nearly 50 years ago, researchers discovered that bacteria in the gut can metabolize levodopa, reducing the amount available to the brain. Only recently did scientists learn that certain bacteria produce enzymes that "digest" levodopa before it reaches the nervous system (Figure 1).

This means patients may experience reduced benefit from their medication or require higher doses, increasing the risk of nausea or involuntary movements (dyskinesia).

What can be done?

New therapies are being developed to block bacterial enzymes that break down levodopa (Rekdal V et al. Science. 2019;364:eaau6323; Bened Life, Patno N. Parkinson's News Today. March 2023). By reducing this gut metabolism, more levodopa would reach the brain, thus increasing dopamine and extending patients' "on time," the period when motor symptoms remain controlled. This approach may also reduce the need for high doses of levodopa.

Other strategies to "rebalance" the gut microbiome and improve levodopa's effectiveness include dietary fiber, fermented foods such as yogurt or kimchi, and supplements like probiotics and prebiotics. However, no rigorous clinical data exist that support these claims.

Moving forward

Currently, no therapies are approved to prevent bacterial metabolism of levodopa. However, understanding the gut-brain connection is opening exciting new directions for PD care. By targeting the microbiome, future treatments may offer more consistent benefits, fewer side effects, and a better quality of life for patients.

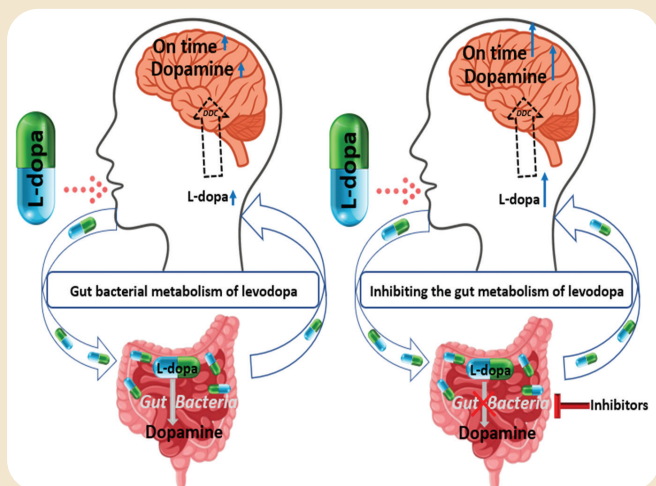


Figure 1. Gut bacteria reduce the availability of levodopa to the brain. **(Left)** In the gut, bacterial enzymes break down levodopa into dopamine in the gut. As a result, less levodopa reaches the brain, reducing dopamine levels and "on time." **(Right)** Blocking bacterial metabolism may allow more levodopa to reach the brain, increasing dopamine and extending "on time" for patients.

Wisconsin Parkinson Association Joins Independent Parkinson's Network



Wisconsin Parkinson Association (WPA) is pleased to share that we have become a member of the Independent Parkinson's Network (IPN). By joining this network of Parkinson's professionals, WPA is harnessing its own expertise and strengths while benefiting from the collective knowledge and experience of a nationwide alliance of independent organizations.

As a member of IPN, WPA remains an independent organization, maintaining its unique identity and local focus. The value of joining this network lies in the ability to collaborate with other regional Parkinson's associations across the country. Through shared vision and collective efforts, the IPN enables organizations like WPA to exchange ideas, resources, and experiences, making each member stronger and more effective in their respective regions.

Member organizations gain access to a national network that provides expertise, peer support, and practical tools aimed at improving the quality of life for individuals



Kelly Cieslak, WPA President & CEO, attended the Annual IPN Leadership Summit in Colorado in July.

affected by Parkinson's disease. WPA is excited to meet and work with other like-minded organizations who focus on education, support, and resources that support people living with Parkinson's help everyone live a more empowered life. Stay tuned for more information on this new connection.

> To learn more about IPN, go to parkinsonsnetwork.com

Young Onset Parkinson's Disease (YOPD) Virtual Support Group

Join Us! 2nd Monday 6:30 - 7:30 PM

Apart from the physical challenges of the disease, people with Young-Onset Parkinson's Disease (YOPD) face unique issues related to family, career, finances and living long-term with the condition. Talking with other people the same age, with similar situations, can be very helpful.

This is a safe space to share your story and questions about your journey with PD. YOPD mentors are available when support is needed along the way.



Find a full list of WPA workshops, support groups and events at wiparkinson.org.

Would you like to receive the Wisconsin Parkinson Magazine?

Stay informed about educational events, support groups, resources and activities by joining the Wisconsin Parkinson Association mailing list at wiparkinson.org or scan the QR code to sign up!



Your donations fund this magazine and help us expand services for those living with Parkinson's. To donate or learn more, visit wiparkinson.org.



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*Wisconsin Parkinson Association provides hope, community, support, and resources
for people with Parkinson's and their loved ones.*