

# Maintaining Oral Health With Parkinson's

Parkinson's disease is a movement disorder that affects motor functions and coordination. Tremors are a classic sign. Often the facial muscles and tongue are involved, affecting speech and the ability to chew.<sup>1</sup>

It can be difficult for people with Parkinson's disease to carry out routine tasks, including daily brushing and flossing. Because good oral health plays a key role in overall health, proper oral hygiene is very important.

If maintaining oral health is a challenge, try these tips:

**Switch to electric:** Electric toothbrushes do the work for you! They are easier to hold and have a rotating or oscillating head that can assist in the finer movements associated with toothbrushing.

**Adjust your grip:** Try placing your toothbrush handle into a tennis ball or bike handle. The larger grip will be easier to hold.

**Talk to your dentist:** If holding a toothbrush is difficult, talk with your dentist about other options or treatments specific to your needs.

**Avoid mouthwash:** Mouthwash can be a choking hazard if you have a weakened swallowing ability.<sup>2</sup>



## Did you know?

Parkinson's disease affects 1 million individuals in the United States.<sup>3</sup>



# Quick bites

## Make dental visits easier by:<sup>4</sup>

- Informing your dentist about your condition, limitations and any medication you are taking.
- Planning appointments around medication dose schedules, about 60 to 90 minutes after taking medication.
- Asking your dentist to adjust the dental chair to an angle that makes it easier to swallow.



Visit us online for more information  
on oral and overall health!

1. National Parkinson's Foundation, "Oral Health and Parkinson's Disease," web.  
2. Parkinson's Disease Foundation, "News and Review," web. 3. Parkinson's Disease Foundation, "Statistics on Parkinson's," web. 4. Parkinson's Disease Foundation, "Understanding Parkinson's: Swallowing and Dental Challenges," web.

**Healthy Smile, Happy Life**

Delta Dental of Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan,  
New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, and Tennessee

