



# **Parkinson's Disease and the Family: A New Guide (The Harvard University Press Family Health Guides)**

*Nutan Sharma M.D., Elaine Richman Ph.D.*

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Parkinson's disease is a movement disorder characterized by tremor, stiffness, and slow gait. It affects 500,000 people in the United States, with approximately 50,000 new cases diagnosed annually. But its impact is much wider. Family members with little understanding of the disease often find themselves struggling to help their loved one navigate the complexities of the health care system. Patients wonder, Which treatments are best for me? Will I be able to live on my own? Should I join a drug trial? In this straightforward, compassionate guide, Nutan Sharma and Elaine Richman address these concerns and more. They provide a thorough review of the etiology, diagnosis, and current treatment of Parkinson's, with special consideration given to the effect on family dynamics and routines--including the often neglected topics of long-term care and sexual function. The authors also review the pros and cons of various alternative therapies, including nutritional supplements, massage therapy, and traditional Chinese medicine.

Too often, with Parkinson's disease, a loved one serves as medical interpreter, patient advocate, and caregiver. In *Parkinson's Disease and the Family*, Nutan Sharma and Elaine Richman draw on the latest research and clinical practice techniques to offer valuable suggestions for managing patient care and, perhaps more important, for healing the family unit.

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