



How the Team Works

The Parkinsons Disease Teams in North and South Taranaki operate under the umbrella of the Older Peoples Health Community Services, but do also manage younger people with Parkinsons Disease and related disorders in association with the visiting neurologists.

Multidisciplinary teams in North and South Taranaki meet monthly to discuss new patients and existing patients with new problems. Appropriate team intervention is then arranged.

All patients with a diagnosis of Parkinsons Disease or a related disorder will be offered an annual medical review, but are welcome to contact any member of the team at any time if they have new concerns or need advice.



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Parkinsons Disease Team



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■ ■ Doctor

(Neurologist or Geriatrician)

Doctors are usually the first point of referral once the possibility of Parkinsons Disease has been raised.

The doctors role is:

- Initial assessment and diagnosis
- Regular review of diagnosis and medication
- Review of new or worsening problems

■ ■ Speech-Language Therapist:

The speech-language therapist's role includes:

- Improvement of vocal loudness and pitch range, including speech therapy programmes such as Lee Silverman Voice Treatment (LSVT)
- Teaching strategies to optimise speech intelligibility
- Ensuring an effective means of communication is maintained throughout the course of the disease, including use of assistive technologies if required
- Review and management to support the safety and efficiency of swallowing and to minimise the risk of aspiration.

■ ■ Parkinsons Society Field Officer:

The role of the Parkinsons Taranaki Field Officer is to provide support, information and advocacy for people with Parkinsons, their carers and families, and health professionals.

This can include:

- Clinical monitoring and medication advice
- A continuing point of contact for support, including home visits when appropriate
- A reliable source of information about clinical and social matters of concern to people with PD and their carers

■ ■ Occupational therapist:

The occupational therapist can provide:

- Maintenance of work and family roles, employment, home care and leisure activities
- Improvement and maintenance of transfers and mobility
- Improvement of personal self-care activities, such as eating, drinking, washing and dressing
- Environmental issues to improve safety and motor function
- Cognitive assessment and appropriate intervention

■ ■ Physiotherapist:

The physiotherapists role is to provide:

- Initial assessment and advice
- Gait re-education and improvement of balance and flexibility
- Programmes to improve fitness / aerobic capacity
- Strategies to improve movement initiation
- Strategies and equipment to improve mobility and functional independence

■ ■ Other Resources:

The team may also involve:

Dietician for dietary assessment and advice about swallowing issues and weight loss

District Nurse for problems with constipation and continence

Social Worker for advice about community resources and financial assistance

Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) Assessor for support services including home help, personal care assistance, day programmes and respite care.

Mental Health Services for Older People (MHSOP) for assessment and treatment of depression, anxiety and thought disorders

Maori Health - Kaimahi Hauora and other community services for advocacy and support for Maori patients and their whanau at any point through the pathway of care

