



# Capital Area Parkinson's Society

Newsletter/August 2018

P.O. Box 27565, Austin, Texas 78755-2565

512-371-3733

capitalareaparkinsons.org

## Home Design and Home Modifications for Those Living with Parkinson's Disease

*Katherine A. Franklin, PT, DPT, CAPS—La Fe Consulting, LLC, August, 2018*

Navigating life after being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease is complex and can be overwhelming. Many times, clients and their family members quickly realize that their living situation is not conducive to safety and independence at home. The process of taking on a major home renovation or remodel (or finding or designing a new home that is better set-up for your individualized needs) is arduous, but can help to maximize quality of life for you and your family. The following solutions are high-impact, low-investment ways to facilitate safety and ease while remaining in your home:

- Barrier-Free Entry:** One of the most likely places for a fall to occur in the home (whether living with PD or not) is while navigating steps or stairs. If you have steps to enter or stairs within your home, having sturdy and supportive handrails is paramount. Ramp installation is an investment that will pay off in the long-term by decreasing the effort needed to safely enter and exit your home, making you more likely to remain active in the community.
- Walk-In Shower:** The other most likely place for a fall to occur in the home is in the bathroom. Having access to a walk-in shower with a safe place to sit down and properly-installed grab bars helps to greatly decrease this risk. Bathrooms can be designed in such a way that these features integrate seamlessly into the style of your home, looking beautiful while also allowing for independence.
- Optimized Flooring:** One of the hallmark characteristics of PD is a change in your gait pattern. Walking with slowed, shuffling steps and experiencing episodes of Freezing of Gait (FOG) becomes even more dangerous when the flooring in your home is not optimized for your individual needs. Removing trip hazards (throw rugs, extension cords, floor-level clutter) is an important first step in maximizing safety. Additionally, installing new floors with enough slip-resistance to keep you safe (without being so resistive that they pose an increased trip hazard) can also help to prevent falls.
- Doorways:** FOG episodes often occur when those with PD are entering and exiting doorways. Designing your home with a more open-concept layout will help minimize these instances, while simultaneously improving your home's value. Widening doorways and thresholds can also help to reduce the feeling of being "stuck." Many clients find that having a visual cue to look for while navigating doorways is helpful in avoiding these freezing episodes. Flooring transitions can be designed in such a way that these visual cues are tastefully integrated into your home.
- Music:** Many clients living with PD experience a reduction in their motor symptoms when music is being played. If your gait is steadier and you have fewer episodes of FOG with background music, there are low-cost ways to beautifully incorporate this technology into your home.

Working alongside a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) means you will have an advocate on your building or remodeling team to help ensure safety and functionality in your home. CAPS professionals have specialty training in designing and building barrier-free living environments that are aesthetically enriching. For more information regarding barrier-free design solutions, please visit [lafeconsulting.com](http://lafeconsulting.com). ■

Capital Area Parkinson's Society  
4th Annual  
**Fall Gala**

**SAVE the DATE**  
Friday, October 26, 2018  
6:30-10:00 pm  
DoubleTree by Hilton Austin  
6505 N. Interstate 35

Live and Silent Auction  
Formal Sit Down Dinner  
Music • Complimentary Parking

For more information, call 512-371-3373 or visit our website at [info@capitalareaparkinsons.org](mailto:info@capitalareaparkinsons.org)

Tickets: \$75  
May be purchased at  
[www.capitalareaparkinsons.org/fallgala](http://www.capitalareaparkinsons.org/fallgala)  
(General and Table Sponsorships available)

Net proceeds benefit the programs and services of the Capital Area Parkinson's Society

**board of Directors**

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## Area Outreach Support Groups

**Brookdale, Northwest Hills –  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday @ 3pm**  
5715 Mesa Drive  
Austin, TX 78731

**Burnet – 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday @ 2pm**  
Seton Highland Lakes Hospital,  
Conference Room  
309 Industrial Blvd. (Behind Hospital)  
Burnet, TX 78611

**Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) –  
3<sup>rd</sup> Friday @ 2pm**  
Neurology Solutions Office  
12345 N. Lamar Blvd.  
Austin, TX 78753

**Lakeway – 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday @ 2pm**  
Vibra Rehabilitation Hospital of Lake Travis  
2000 Medical Drive  
Lakeway, TX 78734

**Simultaneous Care Partner and Patient –  
2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday @ 10:15am**  
Covenant Presbyterian Church  
3003 Northland Drive  
Austin TX 78757

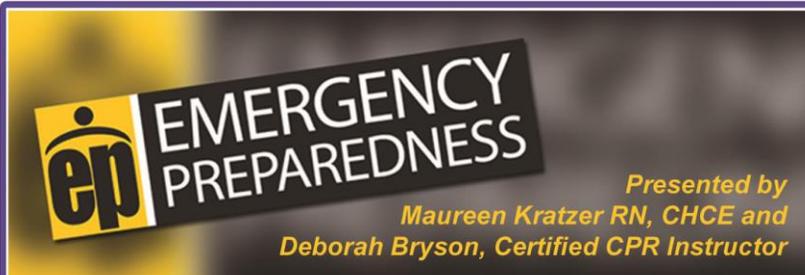
**Young Onset Parkinson's Disease (under 55)  
Dates and Locations Will Vary**  
Austin TX 78756  
Contact: Bob Sahm at 512-914-2132  
or [rsahm99@gmail.com](mailto:rsahm99@gmail.com)

For more information, visit [www.capitalareaparkinsons.org](http://www.capitalareaparkinsons.org).

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## August Membership Meeting



Saturday, August 18 • 2:00-4:00 p.m.  
Medical Office Building, St. David's Medical Center  
3000 N. IH-35, 5th Floor Conference Room

Our Saturday meeting will focus on emergency preparedness, hospital/ER preparedness, basic CPR, rescue breathing and the Heimlich maneuver in the home setting. It's important to make sure that you and your family's basic needs are being met and that they are safe in the event of an emergency, natural or otherwise. The most effective way to do this is by having a great plan in place and to arm ourselves with the knowledge of basic life saving techniques. This is even more important when you or a family member has a medical condition that may require special attention. Our goal is to provide that education, give you the tools to develop your own emergency plan, and teach you basic CPR, rescue breathing, and Heimlich maneuver techniques so you will be confident and prepared when life requires you to be.