



# Capital Area Parkinson's Society

Newsletter/March 2021

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

512-371-3373

capitalareaparkinsons.org

## A Word from Your President



It will be a Valentine's Day (and week) to remember! I just saw a T-shirt that said "I survived Snowvid 21". It is hard to believe that now the temperatures are in the 70's (and more) after the freezing weather we just experienced! I hope that you were able to cope OK with the many challenges that this set of Arctic storms presented. In addition to those challenges, we still have the Covid-19 pandemic to deal with, as well as our own at CAPS to stay alive and well. For that reason, we are embracing whatever opportunities come our way to raise much needed monies to continue our support and efforts for you. **One way for you to do that on March 4th-5th is to contribute to CAPS in Amplify Austin's fundraising campaign for non-profits called "I Live Here; I Give Here" (see below). We would really appreciate your support! And joining CAPS as a member is another way of helping us too. We are developing a special "Members Only" section that will provide you with some special benefits of becoming a member. As CAPS members, you will be supplied with the information to create a User ID and Login so that you will have to access that. Please consider supporting us in these ways. Thank you for being a part of the CAPS family, and please let us hear from you with your concerns, ideas, suggestions, questions, etc. We are here for you! As we head into Spring, my hope for you is that you receive your vaccinations, participate in our programs and events and be well and stay safe!** Take Care, Ingrid

## Answering Your Questions About Parkinson's Disease and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)—UPDATED

American Parkinson Disease Association, Dr. Rebecca Gilbert, February 22, 2021 (modified due to space limitations)

For complete article, please visit

<https://www.apdaparkinson.org/article/questions-about-pd-and-covid-19/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=76f1cd0b-29da-46df-b4d6-646746d0d7e6>.

**Q: I am 65 years old and I have PD. Should I receive a COVID-19 vaccine?**

A: It would be wise to protect yourself as much as possible from COVID-19, which would include getting vaccinated.

**Q: I have heard from some of my friends with PD that amantadine should not be taken when getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Is this true?**

A: Although it may be the case that you should not take the *nasal flu vaccine* when also taking amantadine, this is *not* the case for the COVID vaccine, as far as I am aware.

**Q: In which arm should I have the vaccine, the one with the PD symptoms or the one without?**

A: Since you will likely have some soreness in the vaccinated arm for 1-2 days, it makes sense to get the vaccine in the arm that is less functional.

**Q: Does having PD make you eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, even if you are younger than 65 years old?**

A: This depends on the state. Please consult your local guidelines to be sure.

**Q: Should I keep my normal schedule of Parkinson's medications on the day of a COVID-19 vaccination?**

A: There is no reason to change your PD meds on the day of the vaccination.

**Q: What side effects can I expect from the COVID-19 vaccine?**

A: Some people may experience a mildly sore arm while others may have chills, body aches, headaches and/or fatigue for 1-2 days, but these generally clear up quickly.

**Q: Are there any reasons why a person with PD should not get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

A: There are no substantiated scientific concerns to suggest that the vaccines have a different safety profile in people with PD as compared to the general population.

**Q: Once I am vaccinated, can I go back to doing things as I was before the pandemic?**

A: You are not adequately protected from COVID-19 until about 2-3 weeks after your *second* dose. At that point, protection is about 95% for both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for the original strain. This number may be lower for some of the new variants that are emerging. What we don't yet know is whether a vaccinated person would still be able to transmit the disease to someone else. For that reason, masks and social distancing will remain in place for everyone for the foreseeable future.

**Q: What happens if I get a cough from COVID-19? I know that there are particular cough medications that a person with PD is not supposed to take.**

A: Cough and cold medications containing dextromethorphan, pseudoephedrine, phenylephrine, and ephedrine need to be avoided *only* if you are on a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) such as rasagiline, selegiline or safinamide.

**Q: I have multiple home health aides in my home to help care for my husband with very advanced PD. Should I eliminate this care?**

A: You should inquire whether they have already been or plan to be vaccinated. It does not seem realistic to make you the sole caretaker of your husband. Make sure they wash their hands throughout the day and avoid touching their face, nose, and eyes. If anyone is not feeling well, they should NOT come to the house. Frequently-touched surfaces should be cleaned often and disinfected.

**Q: If a PD patient is on a ventilator due to COVID-19, how do they get their Parkinson's medications?**

A: Often in this situation a tube is placed through the nose and into the gastro-intestinal tract for delivery of medication and food. It is important for you to inform the hospital about all medications the person is taking as well as the dosing/timing so they can make the best decisions for the health of the patient.

**Q: My mother has advanced PD and has been much more anxious since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Do you have any advice on how to help her?**

A: She should go outside at least once a day, making sure that she stays 6 feet away from anyone (except immediate family or whoever is living with her in the house, as long as they are feeling well and taking proper risk-reduction efforts.) Getting fresh air and exercise is vital for everyone. Create a schedule for her with card games, audio books, interaction through Skype or Zoom, etc. There also are online exercise and therapy classes. ■

**\$20**

CAPS  
Capital Area  
Parkinson's Society

**10% discount members only**

Comfortable, wrinkle-free cotton, sizes S-XL, gray only. Order yours online today to support CAPS! Thank you.

SAVE THE DATE

**Join CAPS with Amplify Austin on March 4th!**

For the third year in a row, CAPS has joined the "I Live Here, I Give Here" fundraising campaign as one of the local non-profits raising awareness and donations in the Amplify Austin on-line 24-hour fundraising event (March 4-5, 2021). Your gifts made to us on March 4 will be amplified—so please help us serve the growing needs of the Central Texas Parkinson's community! Here is the link:

<https://www.amplifyatx.org/organizations/capital-area-parkinson-s-society>.

Please let your friends and family members know too! Thank you!!!

Amplify Austin




**Virtual Area Outreach Support Groups**  
 (Contact CAPS office at 512-371-3373 for more information)

- “Women” Care Partners – Tuesdays, Biweekly
- Parkinson’s Care Partners – 1st Wednesday @ 11am
- People for Parkinson’s, Men and Women – 3rd Thursday @ 3pm

**Area Outreach Support Groups - Temporarily On Hold**

- Burnet – 2nd Wednesday @ 2pm
- Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) – 3rd Friday @ 2pm
- Baylor Scott & White/Lakeway – 1st Tuesday @ 2pm
- Parsons House – 2nd Wednesday @ 2pm

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

Don't forget!  
 Next new class is  
 March 18th

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**March Membership Meeting**



**The Reasons for Poor Sleep and Measures to Improve It**  
 Presented by **Dr. Subhashie Wijemanne**

At Parkinson's, Restless Legs & Movement Disorder Specialists, PLLC, in Austin, Texas, Subhashie Wijemanne, MD, is a Board-certified Neurologist and a Movement Disorder Specialist. She provides compassionate and highly specialized care for patients with various movement disorders. Dr. Wijemanne completed her neurology training at Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts, where she also served as the Chief Resident. She furthered her training at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, with a movement disorder fellowship. At her practice, Dr. Wijemanne takes a holistic approach to management of various movement disorders, including Parkinson's disease, tremors, restless legs syndrome, dystonia, tardive dyskinesia, Huntington's disease, ataxia, Tourette's Syndrome and tic disorders, progressive supranuclear palsy, multiple system atrophy, corticobasal degeneration, and spasticity management. Dr. Wijemanne is also trained in special procedures such as botulinum toxin injections and deep brain stimulation (DBS) procedures and offers advanced management for Parkinson's disease.

Following the presentation, there will be a fun dance exercise recorded by Art Beat Dance Center. A link will be posted on the website. They also offer a free PD class—visit <https://www.artbeatdancecenter.com/schedule>.

**Saturday  
 March  
 20th  
 2:00 p.m.**

**Virtual Meeting**

