

Notice It First: Infection Warning Signs for Parkinson's Caregivers

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The fridge checklist Hayley and I wish we'd had sooner.

Why this exists

Hi — it's David. In Parkinson's, infection often shows up in the **brain** first — sudden confusion or “not themselves” — not always fever or pain.

Hayley saw it before I did. Trust the person who sees you every day. If they say “this isn't you,” treat it as a medical signal — not nagging.

Full stories (read when you have time — this page is for *action*):

- Parkinson's and Paronychia: How a Nail Infection Nearly Killed Me
- UTIs and Parkinson's: Hidden Dangers

12 signs to notice first

Check any that are **new or sudden** vs their normal baseline:

- ☐ Sudden confusion / “not themselves”
- ☐ Night delirium / trouble knowing what's real
- ☐ New or worse hallucinations
- ☐ Personality change / agitation
- ☐ Extreme fatigue that isn't a normal OFF
- ☐ Sudden mobility crash / more falls
- ☐ Meds “stopped working” for no clear reason
- ☐ Dystonia or stiffness spike
- ☐ New incontinence / accidents / not waking to pee
- ☐ Urinary urgency, frequency, or foul/cloudy urine (*may be absent*)
- ☐ Low-grade or **no** fever (*fever is not required*)
- ☐ Small wound, swollen finger/toe — **or** nothing obvious but decline is real

Call now / same day

Situation	Action
Sudden confusion + clear decline	Same-day clinician / urgent care / ER per your plan
Can't reach meds, breathing/dystonia fear, unresponsive	Emergency services
Suspected UTI pattern (even without classic burning)	Request urinalysis now — don't wait for “textbook” symptoms

What to tell the clinic (fill in before you call)

- “Parkinson’s patient — sudden cognitive change, possible infection”
- **Baseline (normal for them):** ____
- **Today (what changed):** ____
- **Current meds + last dose time:** ____
- **Wound / urinary change / recent antibiotics:** ____
- **Your name + callback number:** ____
- **Clinic / after-hours number:** ____

Household prep (before a crisis)

- ☐ Phone within reach; path clear; voice call set up if hands/voice are hard
- ☐ Water, meds, rescue plan if you have one
- ☐ One other person who knows the plan
- ☐ If they live alone: **who else has a copy of this checklist?** __

After antibiotics / infection: med timing and gut can scramble. Recovery is often **weeks, not days**. Don’t judge a “new baseline” during the crash. Details: paronychia safety guide.

If you’re the person with PD: your job is to listen when your person says something’s wrong.

More help

- Caregiving hub: lifewithparkinsons.ca/caregiving/
- Don’t add supplements while fighting infection — use the neurologist checklist free tool on the site when things are stable
- Home: lifewithparkinsons.ca

Education only — not medical advice. Follow emergency services and your own care team.

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