



Why Am I Feeling Like This?

A GUIDE TO HALLUCINATIONS AND DELUSIONS FOR PATIENTS WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

People living with Parkinson's disease may have symptoms such as visual hallucinations (seeing people, animals, or things that are not actually there) or other experiences that cause them to feel like their mind is playing tricks on them. If you have these symptoms, it is important to discuss them with your healthcare provider. These symptoms often occur in persons with Parkinson's disease and may be treatable.

WHAT IS PARKINSON'S PSYCHOSIS?

Hallucinations and delusions—also referred to as psychosis—may occur in persons living with Parkinson's disease. Psychosis occurs when patients have thoughts and experiences that are out of touch with reality. These include hallucinations or delusions. These symptoms are common and may occur in more than half of those with Parkinson's disease. Having hallucinations or delusions does not necessarily mean you have a new psychiatric illness.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SYMPTOMS OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE PSYCHOSIS?

The most common symptoms of Parkinson's disease psychosis are visual hallucinations. Other symptoms you may experience are the following:

- Having the vivid sense of a "presence" of someone in the room with you when no one is really there
- Feeling like someone has passed by in the corner of your eye
- Hearing sounds or conversations that are not real
- Smelling or tasting things with no detectable source
- Seeing something else instead of a real object (for example, seeing an insect instead of a spot on the floor)

These symptoms may alarm you, but it is important to remember that they can be a common part of Parkinson's disease.

WHAT ARE DELUSIONS?

Delusions are beliefs that are often disturbing but are irrational and not based on reality. Examples include the belief that a spouse or partner is being unfaithful or abandoning you, or that someone is stealing from you, or that intruders are living in the house, or that caregivers are trying to harm you. These unusual ideas may seem real. It is important to remember that delusions are not intentional. They can be a part of Parkinson's disease in some patients, and usually cannot be controlled.

HOW OFTEN DO HALLUCINATIONS AND DELUSIONS OCCUR IN PATIENTS LIKE ME?

Hallucinations and delusions occur in half or more of all patients with Parkinson's disease. Having hallucinations or delusions does not necessarily mean you have a new psychiatric illness.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I EXPERIENCE HALLUCINATIONS OR DELUSIONS?

If you hear or see things that are not real or have other hallucinations or delusions, it is important to talk to your healthcare provider. Although there is no cure for Parkinson's disease itself, your doctor may be able to take steps to help you with your hallucinations or delusions. These may include adjusting your current medications or providing you with an additional medication to treat the psychotic symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

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