

“Off” Periods Are a Focus of Parkinson’s Research

What Are “Off” Periods?

“Off” periods are times when Parkinson’s disease (PD) medication, namely levodopa, is not working optimally. As a result, symptoms return. These can include both motor symptoms, such as tremor and rigidity, and non-motor symptoms, such as anxiety. After several years of taking levodopa to manage Parkinson’s symptoms, some people report that the medication effect starts to wear off before the next dose is due. This means that the period of time that their medication controls PD symptoms gets shorter, causing symptoms to reappear sooner than expected. “Off” periods also can appear suddenly or unexpectedly.

What Causes “Off” Periods?

Unfortunately, there isn’t a single explanation for “off” periods. They may be due in part to fluctuating medication and dopamine levels. Extensive research is under way to develop new treatments and improve existing ones, to better understand why “off” periods occur and, ultimately, to prevent them.

Why Do I Need to Know about “Off” Periods?

“Off” periods can significantly affect quality of life. We need new and better treatments to address and potentially prevent them. But researchers can’t get there without the help of people who have PD. Research volunteers can help scientists better understand the frequency of “off” periods and how they impact daily life, which can lead to better management strategies.

How Are Clinical Trials and Studies Addressing “Off” Periods?

Because “off” periods can have a big impact on quality of life, scientists have made finding treatments for them an important research focus. If you experience “off” periods, you may want to consider participating in a clinical trial or study evaluating an experimental treatment or other approach to managing them.

How Can I Find Clinical Trials and Studies Addressing “Off” Periods?

Register for Fox Trial Finder, The Michael J. Fox Foundation’s online clinical trial matching tool, at www.foxtrialfinder.org.

