

Michael J. Fox: This is Michael J. Fox. Thanks for listening to this podcast. Learn more about the Michael J. Fox Foundation's work and how you can help speed a cure at michaeljfox.org.

MJFF: Welcome to a recap of our latest Ask The MD video. Tune in as a movement disorder specialist at the Michael J. Fox Foundation answers your questions about Parkinson's research and care. Learn more about living well with Parkinson's disease. Free resources like this podcast are always available at michaeljfox.org.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: As we head into the upcoming holidays, during a pandemic, many of us are wondering how to safely travel, celebrate traditions and gather with loved ones, especially if those loved ones have Parkinson's. And while seeing somebody with Parkinson's may be safe, there's a lot to consider right now. The risks of COVID for them and for you, what your visit could look like, whether that's in-person, online, or at the window of somebody who lives in assisted living, or at a nursing home. And don't forget your personal wellbeing during this incredibly stressful time. Everyone has different comfort levels and concerns when it comes to COVID. And every family has its own traditions to celebrate. Talk about your feelings and concerns, so that you can craft a visit that works for everyone who's involved. Talk about who will be meeting where, what you'll do beforehand, and what you'll actually do during the visit.

And if you're meeting somebody with Parkinson's, there are steps you can take to help you plan for and get the most out of your visit. Watch this video, which was recorded in 2018, but much of which remains relevant today.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: Today, I'll be talking about visiting family members with Parkinson's. If you're planning to visit a family member who has Parkinson's, especially one you haven't seen in a while, you may not know what to expect. Sometimes people notice a big change and they aren't sure if this is a normal part of Parkinson's or what to do about it. Our new guide on visiting family members with Parkinson's has tips on preparing for a visit and managing change. Three tips are to prepare for the unexpected. Often when people hear about their loved one's Parkinson's and what they see don't match up. This can happen for different reasons.

Your family member may not tell you much because they don't want you to worry, or they may not recognize certain symptoms such as mood or memory changes. Extend your visit. If you have the flexibility, try to add an extra day or two onto your trip and don't pack your itinerary too full. This could allow you more time to focus on your family member outside of holiday celebrations, and maybe even visit the doctor together. Observe your loved one and their care partner. During your visit, watch for certain symptoms like balance problems or falling, which can signal the need for a change in treatment or support. But don't forget about the care partner. Look for signs of burnout, such as fatigue, depression, or irritability.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun: And for more tips on meeting during the pandemic, download our free updated guide on visiting family who have Parkinson's at michaeljfox.org. And no matter what, try to enjoy the holidays, you're doing the best you can during these uncertain and challenging times.

MJFF: Thanks for listening. Looking for a specific topic, not covered in today's episode? All Ask the MD blogs and videos are available for free at michaeljfox.org.

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