

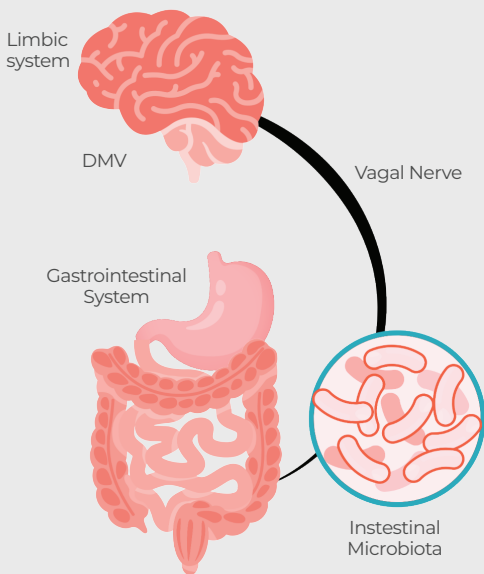
How the Gut-Brain Connection Influences Parkinson's Disease

The gut and brain are constantly communicating through a pathway known as the vagus nerve. This connection plays an important role in regulating digestion, mood, immune responses, and overall brain function. A healthy gut microbiome, made up of beneficial bacteria, helps keep this communication balanced and functioning effectively.

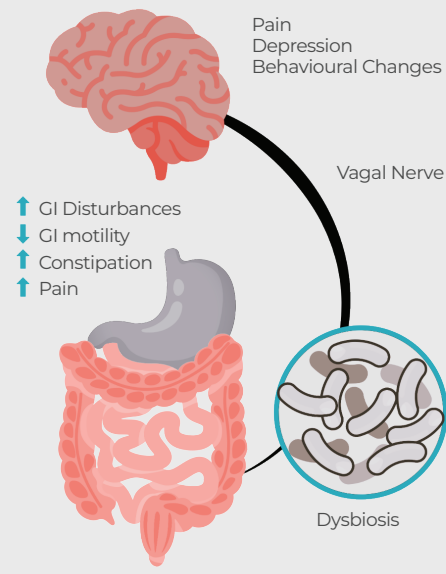


The Gut-Brain-Parkinson's Connection

NORMAL



PARKINSON'S DISEASE



Changes in gut health may affect signals to the brain, potentially playing a role in Parkinson's symptoms.

Normal (left): The gut and brain communicate smoothly through the vagus nerve. A balanced gut microbiome supports normal brain function and stable digestion.

Parkinson's disease (right): An imbalanced gut microbiome (dysbiosis) may disrupt this communication. This is linked to digestive issues (like constipation and reduced gut movement) and can also influence brain-related symptoms such as pain, depression, and behavioural changes.

- 219,000 Australians living with Parkinson's or atypical Parkinson's
- 38–50 diagnosed daily (more than 1 per hour)
- 19,500+ new cases each year
- 10–20% Young Onset (ages 20–50)

- 1,100+ under 65 diagnosed annually
- Slightly more common in men (52%) than women (48%)
- Growing by ~4% each year, the fastest-growing neurological condition worldwide

Foods to Limit or Avoid

Excess Sugar

- Feeds harmful gut bacteria
- May increase inflammation
- Linked to mood fluctuations and brain fog

Highly Processed Foods

- Often low in fibre and nutrients
- Can disrupt gut balance
- May negatively impact overall brain function

Artificial Additives

- May alter gut bacteria composition
- Potential to irritate the digestive system
- Linked to changes in brain signalling

Practical Tips for People with Parkinson's

- Eat regular, balanced meals to support steady energy levels
- Stay well hydrated to aid digestion and overall health
- Include fibre-rich foods daily to support gut function
- Keep a food and symptom diary to track patterns and triggers
- Work with a healthcare professional or dietitian for personalised advice

Seek Professional Advice

It is important to seek medical advice before making significant dietary changes, especially when managing Parkinson's disease. Neurologists, dietitians, and allied health professionals can provide informed advice to help ensure dietary choices support both symptom management and overall health.

Need Extra Peace of Mind?

INS LifeGuard offers 24/7 nurse-monitored personal alarms and supported health monitoring to help people living with Parkinson's feel safer, more confident, and better supported at home and in the community.