

JUNE 2026

Barbara Marquardt, Editor, M.Ed., MCHES, WCP, RYT

June MEETING / Wednesday, June 3, 2026 2:15 p.m.

We will be having a movie day showing "**The Boys of Summer: Short Stop**". It is a family's cross-country adventure as they meet baseball legends, connect with Parkinson's community, and navigate powerful moments of living with PD. **The Boys of Summer: Short Stop** is a warm, funny, and honest celebration of family, resilience, and love. The movie, which is just 53 minutes long, will be followed with a Q & A with the **Director Robert Cochrane**. We will have popcorn as well!

**Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center
One Monticello Blvd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118**

JULY MEETING / Wednesday, July 1, 2026 2:15 p.m.

We welcome back **Ben Rossi, Co-Founder and Chief Program Officer, of InMotion**. We have been fortunate to have Ben present and lead us in exercises specific to helping those with PD many times over the years. All in a fun and helpful way!

From David Brandt

Upcoming Events

Saturday, June 6, 2026 - Moving Day Cleveland put on by **Parkinson's Foundation Great Lakes**. – Activities begin at 9 a.m. at the Brookside Reservation, 3900 John Nagy Blvd, Cleveland. Activities include rock climbing, golfing greens and shoe activation. The walk begins at 10:30 a.m. Contact Megan Green at mgreen@parkinson.org or 614-918-7303 for details.

Saturday, June 20, 2026 – Living In Motion put on by **InMotion**. 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. The Keynote Speaker is Dr. Jay Alberts, Ph.D., Vice Chair of Innovations at the Cleveland Clinic Neurological Institute. This is for those with PD and their families to explore the role of exercise, education, and community in living well. To be held at InMotion at 23905 Mercantile Road Beachwood, OH. Free but registration is required by calling 216-342-4417.

Saturday, August 1-2, 2026 – Papa's Path presents its 24 hour walk at the Beachwood High School Track. All

day events will be planned ending in the Sunday morning walk to Ahuja Medical Center.

Sunday, August 30, 2026 – Pals in Motion is the biggest event and fundraiser for **InMotion** and includes a run, a walk, and many family friendly activities.

Saturday, October 31, 2026 – 17th Annual University Hospitals Parkinson's Boot Camp at the Cleveland Marriott East in Warrensville Hts. Headline speaker will be Dr. Sarah Wittingham, a participant in the 2023 IRONMAN World Championship. More details to follow.

TRIBUTES

**The Fidelity Charitable Donor-Advised Fund
made at the recommendation of the
Progressive Insurance Foundation's Name
Your Cause, an employee-nominated giving
program**

Bill Fulton And Jeff Duber

Diane Shelton

PD Question Corner

Email: barbaramarquardt@outlook.com

Question: Could low level light laser therapy help Parkinson's?

Answer: Great question! A research article by Patricia A. Trimmer, Ph.D., University of Virginia, Morris K. Udall Parkinson's Research Center of Excellence stated positive results from using Laser Light Therapy to rejuvenate mitochondrial (your energy powerhouse) activity. The mitochondria in Parkinson tissues do not work well, and treatment that enriches the mitochondria will help with symptoms of Parkinson's. The results of this study showed that one treatment with low-level light therapy, (LLLT) did restore axonal transport. The study further concluded that LLLT may be used as a treatment to improve neuronal function in patients with Parkinson's disease. Lastly, one of the great things to point out is that laser light therapy is safe and noninvasive! Please be sure to discuss with your health care provider if you would like to learn more.

Many modalities exist for treating Parkinson's, and the key is finding what truly works for you.

New Tests May Help Diagnose Parkinson's & Dementia with Lewy Bodies

(Excerpt from Parkinson Foundation)

Diagnosing Parkinson's disease (PD) and dementia with Lewy bodies is challenging because there is no single definitive diagnostic test. That is why finding reliable biomarkers — measurable signs in the body that indicate disease — is a major focus of PD research. Biomarkers help make more accurate diagnoses, can help track disease progression and tell us if treatments are working.

PD and dementia with Lewy Bodies lead to the buildup of a misfolded protein called alpha-synuclein and the loss of dopamine. A protein called DDC helps produce dopamine, so changes in DDC levels make it a potentially useful biomarker.

A new study published in Nature Medicine identified DDC as a promising biomarker. Using cerebrospinal fluid collected through a spinal tap, researchers developed new tests to measure DDC levels.

Study Highlights – A new test uses the protein called DDC

as a biomarker to help identify PD.

DDC levels in spinal fluid were significantly higher in people with PD and dementia with Lewy bodies — up to 2.5 times higher than in people without these diseases.

Overall, the tests were accurate at distinguishing PD and dementia with Lewy bodies from people without these diseases and differentiated these conditions from Alzheimer's disease.

People with symptoms (for example, movement symptoms) had higher DDC levels.

What do these findings mean to people with PD? – The DDC biomarker is not yet available as a clinical test, but as we saw with the skin biopsy test, biomarker tests can quickly move from research to being used in-clinic. Having multiple biomarkers to identify PD will help strengthen diagnoses and improve accuracy. Studies like this one could give people greater confidence in diagnosis based on biological evidence, not only a doctor's assessment. This study also reinforces that the symptoms people with Parkinson's experience reflect measurable brain changes in the brain.

(Excerpt from PMD Alliance)

Cleaning chemicals TCE and PCE are strongly linked to Parkinson's disease, and they're lurking in the drinking water of 14 million Americans. That's why filtering your drinking water is one of the primary recommendations from experts for those working to reduce their risk of Parkinson's.

Because the majority of PD diagnoses (85%) are not linked to a genetic risk factor. Instead, they're likely caused by pollutants in our water, on our crops, and in our air.

We need your donations to continue bringing you the PEP News and for other expenses. A special thanks to those who contribute at the monthly meetings. To send a donation, please make your checks payable to Parkinson Education Program and mail to 2785 Edgehill Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44106

What is early onset Parkinson's disease?

(Excerpt from medicalnewstoday.com)

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he National Institute on Aging Trusted Source notes that although symptoms appear after the age of 60 years in most people with Parkinson's disease, in 5–10% of cases, it occurs before the age of 50 years. Doctors refer to these cases as early onset Parkinson's disease.

Some people develop juvenile Parkinson's disease, in which the symptoms start appearing before the age of 20 years. The American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) notes that 10–20% of people with Parkinson's disease have the early onset form, meaning that it affects about 6,000–12,000 people in the United States.

Scientists do not know exactly why Parkinson's disease happens, but they believe that it results from a combination of environmental and genetic factors. Head injury and exposure to toxins, such as pesticides, may contribute.

About 10% Trusted Source of all cases have a genetic cause, and most of these involve younger people. In cases where there is a genetic cause, the disease may be hereditary. However, some of the symptoms that can develop quite rapidly in older people may not affect younger people for many years.

These include: confusion, memory loss, problems with balance. For this reason, the treatment and care that a person with early onset Parkinson's disease needs may be different. People with early onset Parkinson's disease also face different lifestyle challenges. While many people continue to work and enjoy family life, they may need to make some adjustments over time.

New Study Finds Counterproductive Effect of Parkinson's Disease Drug

(Excerpt from medicine.yale.edu)

Levodopa—the gold-standard treatment for Parkinson's disease—increases dopamine in the brain. But as the disease progresses in severity, patients often need to take additional drugs to manage their symptoms.

One class of drugs, called catechol-O-methyltransferase inhibitors (COMT-Is), can help increase the amount of levodopa that reaches the brain.

But a new study finds that COMT-Is can interact with the microbiome in a way that hinders levodopa's efficacy.

Yale School of Medicine (YSM) research, published April 6 in *Nature Microbiology*, has found that COMT-Is can trigger compositional changes in the gut microbiome that promote the growth of bacteria that break down levodopa before it can reach the brain.

“We found a counterproductive effect of this drug that's meant to increase levodopa efficacy,” says lead author Andrew Verdegaal, PhD, a postdoctoral associate in the lab of senior author Andrew Goodman, PhD, chair and C.N.H. Long Professor of Microbial Pathogenesis and director of the Microbial Sciences Institute. “While we generally think of the liver as the mediator for drug-drug interactions, this interaction occurs instead through the gut microbiome.”

Bacteria disruption hinders levodopa – Parkinson's disease is caused by a decrease in dopamine production. Levodopa is an oral medication that is absorbed and crosses the blood-brain barrier, where it is converted into dopamine. “This drug is a way for the body to externally receive dopamine,” says Verdegaal. “But it has to get into the brain to have an effect.”

Some enzymes in the body can interact with the drug before it reaches the brain and convert it into a different compound that cannot cross the blood-brain barrier. COMT-Is work by blocking these enzymes before they can chemically modify levodopa, boosting the drug's efficacy.

In the new study, however, the researchers discovered that COMT-Is have antibacterial properties that alter the microbiome. When COMT-Is kill off susceptible gut bacteria, other bacteria thrive, the researchers found. This includes *Enterococcus faecalis*, which contains an enzyme that can also metabolize levodopa and prevent it from reaching the brain.

“People often require co-prescription of multiple drugs. While Parkinson's disease is one example, this study suggests that we should look more closely at

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PEP NEWS

Parkinson Education Program
of Greater Cleveland
2785 Edgehill Rd.
Cleveland Heights, OH 44106

Address Service Requested

**New Study Finds Counterproductive
Effect of Parkinson’s Disease Drug**

(cont’d from Page 3)

the role of the microbiome in response to other co-prescribed drugs.” The findings support previous research indicating that patients with higher levels of E. faecalis in their gut experience reduced benefit from levodopa. “People often require co-prescription of multiple drugs,” says Verdegaal. “While Parkinson’s disease is one example, this study suggests that we should look more closely at the role of the microbiome in response to other co-prescribed drugs.” The study also adds to growing evidence that differences in microbiomes can help explain why patients experience different effects from the same drug. “I hope our research is a stepping stone to understand this in a wider context,” Verdegaal says.

We try to keep our roster current. If you no longer wish to receive this bulletin or would like to receive it via email instead, notify Katherine.A.Kaminski@gmail.com or call 216-513-8990.

TO REACH US AT
PEP 440-742-0153
dbrandtpep@gmail.com
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Partial grant support provided by OPFNE



ohparkinson.com

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Laughter is Medicine

Where do sheep go on vacation?

The Baaaa-hamaas