

PARKINSON'S DISEASE - A PREVENTIBLE ILLNESS?

By David Perlmutter, M.D.

It has been estimated in the United States alone, more than one million people have Parkinson's disease, with more than 50,000 new cases being diagnosed each year. The prevalence in the over 55 population approaches 1 in 100.

Typically, Parkinson's disease is considered "idiopathic", which is to say no clear-cut cause is readily identifiable. That being said, the idea of preventing Parkinson's disease certainly does not fit with our general understanding of this illness.

New research, however, is revealing that certain lifestyle factors may considerably increase the risk of Parkinson's disease. In two fascinating reports in the January 1999 issue of *Movement Disorders*, the relationship of increased risk of Parkinson's disease to both occupational exposure to pesticides as well as intake of animal fats, was described. In the first report, dietary data from 103 patients with the disease were compared to a similar number of controls. Those individuals having the highest consumption of animal fat were at a 300% increased risk for developing Parkinson's disease. Interestingly, there was a lower risk of Parkinson's disease in those individuals eating foods high in niacin.

There was also confirmation of the long-held belief that occupational exposure to agricultural work and pesticide exposure, significantly increases the risk of Parkinson's disease.

Why high-fat diets may increase the risk of Parkinson's disease is not clear. Nevertheless, there may be a relationship between these two studies in that consuming foods high on the food chain (animals) does increase an individual's consumption of fat soluble pesticides which are now ubiquitous in our environment. In the mid-1980's research demonstrated that a particular toxin could immediately cause Parkinson's disease. This has formed the foundation for a school of research exploring how a toxic insult can damage a particular part of the brain and create a disease like Parkinson's.

The take-home message from these two reports is simply that Parkinson's should not be considered to be a disease that develops "out of the blue". There are very important modifiable factors, which can significantly increase the risk of this debilitating problem.

Dr.B. adds: There is also a clear relationship to the bacterial and fungal toxins associated with dental cavitations or jawbone osteonecrosis. Read the article, this site, in the dental section taken from the *Dental Truth Magazine* put out by DAMS (Dental Amalgam Mercury Solutions). Also, aspartame and Lyme toxins can also cause a Parkinson's like syndrome.