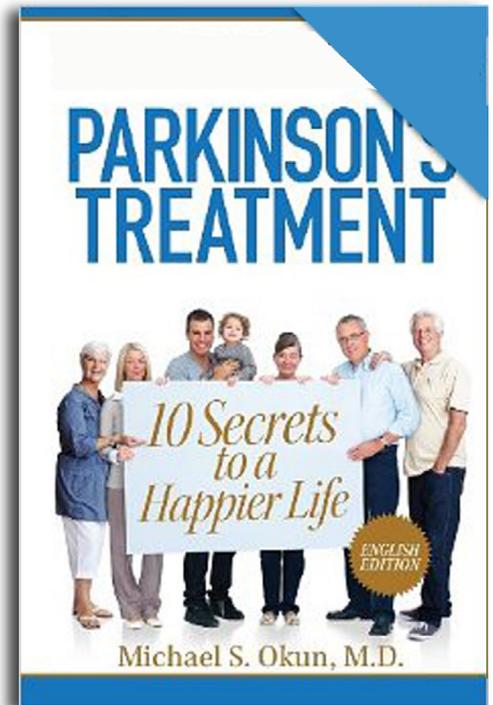


Parkinson's Treatment: 10 Secrets to a Happier Life

Parkinson's Treatment: 10 Secrets to a Happier Life is a 114-page paperback book, written by Michael S. Okun, M.D, a pre-eminent expert in the field and medical director of the National Parkinson Foundation, published by Amazon this year and sold by them for \$11.16. The NPFOCC office has a copy which may be borrowed. Dr. Okun has a warm empathetic style of writing directed to the patient, the family and care-giver.

The 10 “secrets” are tips for coping with Parkinson's Disease (PD), including being pro-active in learning the signs and symptoms of the disease, when to take the medication, the importance of exercise and sleep, and being prepared whenever you are hospitalized to educate the staff as to what to do and not do in a patient with PD. A kit called an *Aware in Care Kit* (available at no charge in the NPFOCC office) has been devised to take with you to the hospital containing information for the staff.



One chapter is titled *Exercise Improves Brain Function*. Dr. Okun cites several studies supporting the benefits of vigorous exercise, but cautions that more studies are needed to determine whether it “may yield disease-modifying or neuroprotective” changes.

Another chapter is devoted to deep brain stimulation (DBS), which has taken its place as an acceptable treatment in PD. However, it seldom allows the patient to stop all pills, and it should be used only after careful evaluation by an interdisciplinary team. The formation of such teams has “greatly enhanced the level of care...DBS has improved the care for all PD patients, even those not receiving the procedure.” DBS stimulates the growth of new brain cells.

In recent years there has been an unprecedented number of innovative approaches to the investigation and treatment of PD, including gene therapy, stem cells, the use of viruses, the “optogenetic” approach, targeting protein degradation pathways, neuroprotection exploratory trials, and a PD vaccine.

Dr. Okun suggests asking your doctor at every visit what is new and promising. Consider taking part in a clinical trial. He urges us to have hope. He lists several tips to “kindle hope into happiness,” a few of which are the following: “Don't be defined by the disease; share the journey with other PD patients and families; exercise daily; choose an empathetic doctor; beware of those who offer miracle cures to make a dollar; and develop a vision for who you want to be and live that vision.”

This book would be worthwhile reading for anyone involved with PD.

Book Review by Alan Massing, M.D.