



# YOUR HEALTH AND WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

APRIL/MAY 2022

## Parkinson's Awareness

### *When is therapy necessary?*

According to the Parkinson's Foundation, almost one million people are living with Parkinson's disease and approximately 60,000 people are diagnosed each year. Parkinson's disease is a progressive movement disorder, in which there is currently no cure for, but there is hope. There is strong evidence that exercise can help slow the progression of the disease and help you live a meaningful life.

The various symptoms of Parkinson's disease can progress slowly enough that you don't realize that it is already changing your movement patterns, speech, and/or cognitive functioning. It is best to get established with a specialized therapy group to perform a **baseline assessment**, provide awareness and education, as well as tools to help you with internal monitoring of abilities. Your therapist will teach you exercises that can be safely performed at home. There are other beneficial treatments that your doctor may prescribe, but exercise should be on the forefront of everyone's mind. There is a misperceived notion that newly diagnosed individuals don't all need therapy right away. This is not entirely true. Therapy has so much to offer in terms of providing you with the tools to live comfortably, slow the progression of symptoms, and prepare yourself with an action plan for now and when you start to experience more changes.

Research has shown that specialized exercise for Parkinson's can offer neuroprotection to optimize brain health, promote neuroplasticity to enhance brain adaptation, and improve physical capacity to be able to fully participate in exercise and preferred lifestyle. Parkinson's Wellness Recovery (PWR!) certified therapists can guide individuals through a functional Parkinson's Disease specific exercise program to help with symptoms of rigidity, bradykinesia, incoordination, and automaticity. LSVT BIG certified therapists provide therapy with an emphasis on large movement patterns, while LSVT LOUD certified therapists encourage large vocal amplitude and production. LSVT stands for Lee Silverman Voice Training and is an evidence-based treatment approach focused on individuals with a diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease.

At Life Beyond Barriers Rehabilitation Group, we have both certified (PWR!, LSVT BIG & LOUD) and skilled therapists that can help you, whether you have been newly diagnosed or are continuing your journey with Parkinson's. Ask your doctor about starting these treatments as early as possible, along with a baseline assessment to understand your potential in carrying out a meaningful life with daily activity and interaction.

# Stroke Awareness

May is Stroke Awareness Month! Following a stroke (mostly right hemisphere), cognitive and visual effects can occur and go unnoticed, especially when there are not any compounding physical or speech deficits present. Individuals may find themselves struggling to hold a conversation with others, staying on task with work or household duties, unable to return to previous reading habits, difficulty with paying attention to a movie, challenged by decision making or remembering things, running into things or falling due to a misjudgement of depth or distance, overwhelmed by too much going on in the environment affecting concentration, and/or may not be able to control behavior. Sometimes the affected individual may not be aware of their own deficits, which makes it difficult to diagnose. If you or someone you know has experienced similar difficulties, talk with your/their doctor. A referral can be made to an outpatient neurological rehabilitation clinic for a physical, occupational, and/or speech therapy assessment, to assist in determining the next steps of stroke rehabilitation.

## What's new?

Welcome Office Coordinator Ginger Anderson. We are thankful and excited to have her in our Traverse City clinic.

## What's happening?

**May is Stroke Awareness Month!** For the month of May, Life Beyond Barriers Rehabilitation Group will be providing free blood pressure screenings. One way you can prevent a stroke from happening is ensuring you have a healthy blood pressure. Many people who have high blood pressure do not even know it. It is known as the "silent killer". Ask your therapist to check your blood pressure.

**May is Better Hearing & Speech Month!** This campaign was founded by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Check out our educational booths throughout the month of May to raise awareness about communication disorders and learn how Speech Therapy can help you.

**Food For Thought Thursdays** - Nutrition classes geared towards learning new and simple skills, in addition to gaining information on how certain foods can improve your rehabilitation goals. Classes are offered as a hybrid with in person at the Rockford clinic and virtually, the first Thursday of each month beginning May 5, 2022. To find out more, please email Nicole [njeddy@lbbrehab.com](mailto:njeddy@lbbrehab.com).

To support caregivers, LBBRG continues to host **The Caregiver's Table** meetings in a virtual format. Meetings occur every fourth Wednesday of the month. If you would like more information, contact Kyle via email [kmmedearis@lbbrehab.com](mailto:kmmedearis@lbbrehab.com) or Sara [sroach@lbbrehab.com](mailto:sroach@lbbrehab.com).

## Save the Dates

Save the date for the following events and follow LBBRG's News and Events page for additional information as it becomes available <https://lbbrehab.com/community/news/>

May 26, 2022: 36th Annual Parkinson's Summer Forum (Traverse City)

June 3, 2022: Hunt 2 Heal Golf Outing (Hudsonville)

June 16, 2022: Accessible Recreation Day - Traverse City Civic Center

August 4, 2022: Traverse City Pit Spitters, Common Threads event

August 18, 2022: West Michigan Whitecaps, Common Threads event

