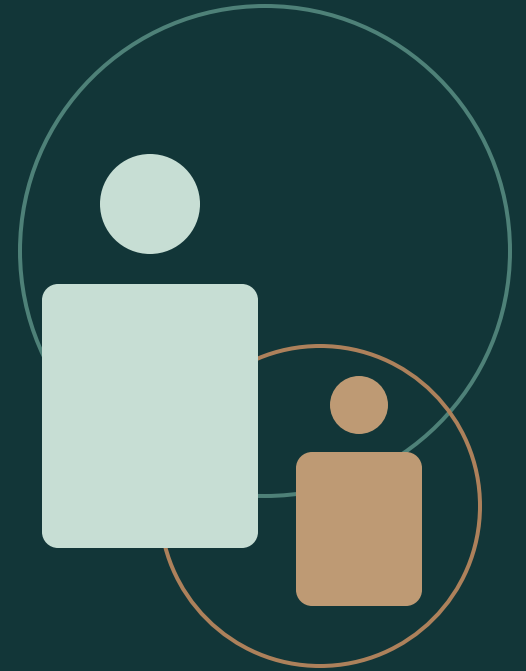


Living well, together

Comfort for the person. Support for the caregiver.

Kaushal Nanavati

Syracuse, New York · October 21, 2026



The health care tree supports the whole person

Innovations

What could improve our care?

Disease management

What needs relief today?

Disease prevention

What harm can we reduce?

Health promotion

What helps us live well?



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Acknowledge the problem you are facing

Accept your feelings

Forgive yourself

“Acceptance and Forgiveness lead to Contentment and Peace”

Seek Help

- Respite

- Support group (*EMPOWER PARKINSON*)

- Local and Web based resources

- Counseling, Social Work

Prevention reduces avoidable complications

01 Falls and dizziness

Home safety, trained transfers and medication review

02 Swallowing and weight

Early assessment when eating becomes difficult

03 Hospital safety

An accurate medicine list and the usual dosing times

04 General health

Routine care and prevention remain important

Preventing complications is different from preventing Parkinson's itself.

Caregiver strain calls for more support

Notice the load

Poor sleep, irritability, isolation or missed appointments

Name the need

“I need a break” is useful information for the team

Arrange coverage

A trained helper, a specific task and a scheduled time

A specific request is easier to act on: “Can you cover Tuesday from 2 to 4?”

Circles of Peace can become a support map

Self

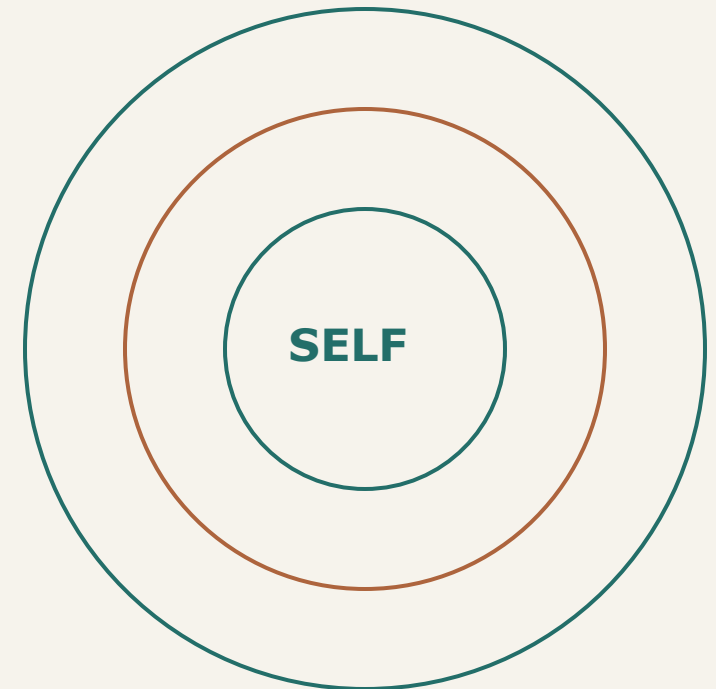
One need I will make visible

Close relationships

One person who can share a defined task

Wider community

One service, group or professional to contact



An adaptation of my “Circles of Peace” framework.

Comfort begins with one priority

Ask

“What is bothering you most today?”

Observe

Pain, bowel symptoms, mood, sleep and timing

Respond

Agree on one action and a time to review it

Illustrative scenario: a more comfortable evening for Maya and Arun.



A clear team can reduce the family's workload

Neurology and primary care

Medicines and general health

Rehabilitation and nutrition

Mobility, daily tasks, communication and meals

Social work and palliative care

Resources, symptom relief and family support

“Who can help coordinate this plan?”

Sources: [2] [5] [6]

Choice and acceptance can protect dignity

“Would you like help, or would you like more time?”

A helpful question

“Would you like help, or more time?”

A kinder response

Acknowledge difficult feelings without self-blame

A realistic focus

Choose the next action, while allowing for uncertainty

Mind–body care has specific, limited benefits

Tai chi

A tailored trial improved balance in selected participants

Mindfulness yoga

A trial improved anxiety and depression symptoms

Rhythm and cueing

PT can tailor external cues for gait training



Photo: Empower Parkinson, Inc., Our Classes

An adapted program should fit the person's abilities and goals.

Sources: [2] [3] [4]

Music and touch may support comfort

Music for connection

Choose familiar, enjoyable sound at a comfortable volume



Touch by permission

Gentle comfort measures, with attention to pain and skin



A clear boundary

PD-specific evidence for massage and aromatherapy is limited



Comfort is a valid goal. Claims should match the evidence.

New options need a clear goal and review

Adaptive DBS

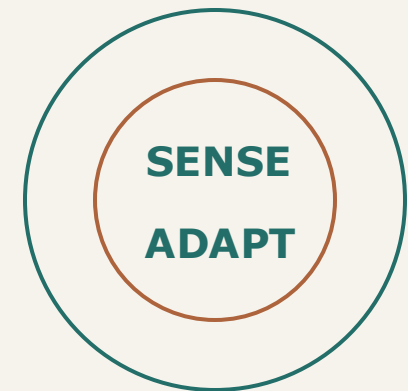
An FDA-approved option for selected patients

Every new approach

Check suitability, cost, interactions and added workload

A useful trial

One goal, a safety review and a date to reassess



Specialist programming

DBS = deep brain stimulation. Candidacy requires specialist assessment.

One shared plan can begin this week

For the person

One comfort or activity goal

For the caregiver

One specific task handoff or protected break

For the team

One priority to discuss and one follow-up date

For the community

One Empower Parkinson connection

empowerparkinson.org · (315) 424-3027

Sources: [15]



Photo: Empower Parkinson, Inc., Our Classes

**More comfort. More connection.
Room for peace.**

“What would make tomorrow a little easier?”

Both people deserve care.

Four foundations make wellness personal

01 Nourishment

Enough food, fluids and energy for your needs

02 Movement

Activity that fits your body and your goals

03 Emotional well-being

Space for feelings, support and professional care

04 Spiritual well-being

Meaning, values and connection in your own terms

A small, feasible step can support what matters to you.

Movement supports function and confidence

150 minutes per week

A goal to build toward, adapted to ability

A balanced program

Aerobic activity, strength, balance and flexibility

A safe starting point

Parkinson's physical therapy and enjoyable activities

Begin at your current ability and increase with guidance.

Sources: [1] [2]



Photo: Empower Parkinson, Inc., Our Classes

Exercise for neuroprotectivity: high intensity, large amplitudes (big movements), or complex coordination. [1, 2]

1. High-Intensity Aerobic Training (Best for Brain Plasticity & Gait Speed)

- **Specific Examples:** High-cadence stationary cycling (aiming for 75 to 90+ RPM), brisk treadmill training, and aqua aerobics.

2. Dance & Multitask Training (Best for Overall Motor Symptoms & Quality of Life)

- **Specific Examples:** Argentine Tango, Waltz, and rhythm-based stepping patterns.

3. Non-Contact Boxing & Agility Drills (Best for Power & Multi-Directional Speed)

- **Specific Examples:** Heavy bag punching drills, rapid footwork agility ladders, and defensive slipping movements.

4. Mind-Body Practices: Tai Chi & Yoga (Best for Balance & Fall Prevention, postural stability and spatial awareness)

- **Specific Examples:** Traditional [Tai Chi](#) forms or Amplitude-Focused practices like LSVT BIG or PWR! Moves

5. Progressive Resistance Training (Best for Physical Independence & Daily Strength)

- **Specific Examples:** Free weights, resistance bands, or leg presses targeting major muscle groups.

The Weekly Parkinson's Routine

Day	Exercise Focus	Duration	Goal / Benefit
Monday	High-Intensity Aerobics (Stationary Cycling or Brisk Walking)	30–45 mins	Boosts brain plasticity and increases overall gait speed.
Tuesday	Strength & Big Movements (Resistance Bands & LSVT BIG / PWR! Moves)	30–45 mins	Overcomes muscle rigidity and improves ability to get out of chairs.
Wednesday	Dance or Boxing Drills (Rhythm work or non-contact punching)	45–60 mins	Challenges spatial coordination, multi-tasking, and agility.

Thursday	Active Recovery & Balance (Tai Chi or Yoga)	45–60 mins	Maximizes fall prevention, targets posture, and reduces anxiety.
Friday	High-Intensity Aerobics (Stationary Cycling or Aqua Aerobics)	30–45 mins	Continues to stimulate dopamine signaling and fight fatigue.
Saturday	Fun / Social Movement (Tango dancing, golf, or a brisk outdoor walk)	60 mins	Combines motor learning with social connection for mental health.
Sunday	Rest & Recovery	All Day	Allows muscles to repair and prevents central nervous system fatigue.

Food and rest should make daily life easier

Nourishment

Protect weight and muscle with a varied diet

Comfort

Address constipation, hydration and swallowing concerns

Rest

Report dream enactment or marked daytime sleepiness

Restrictive diets and poor sleep can add to the burden of care.

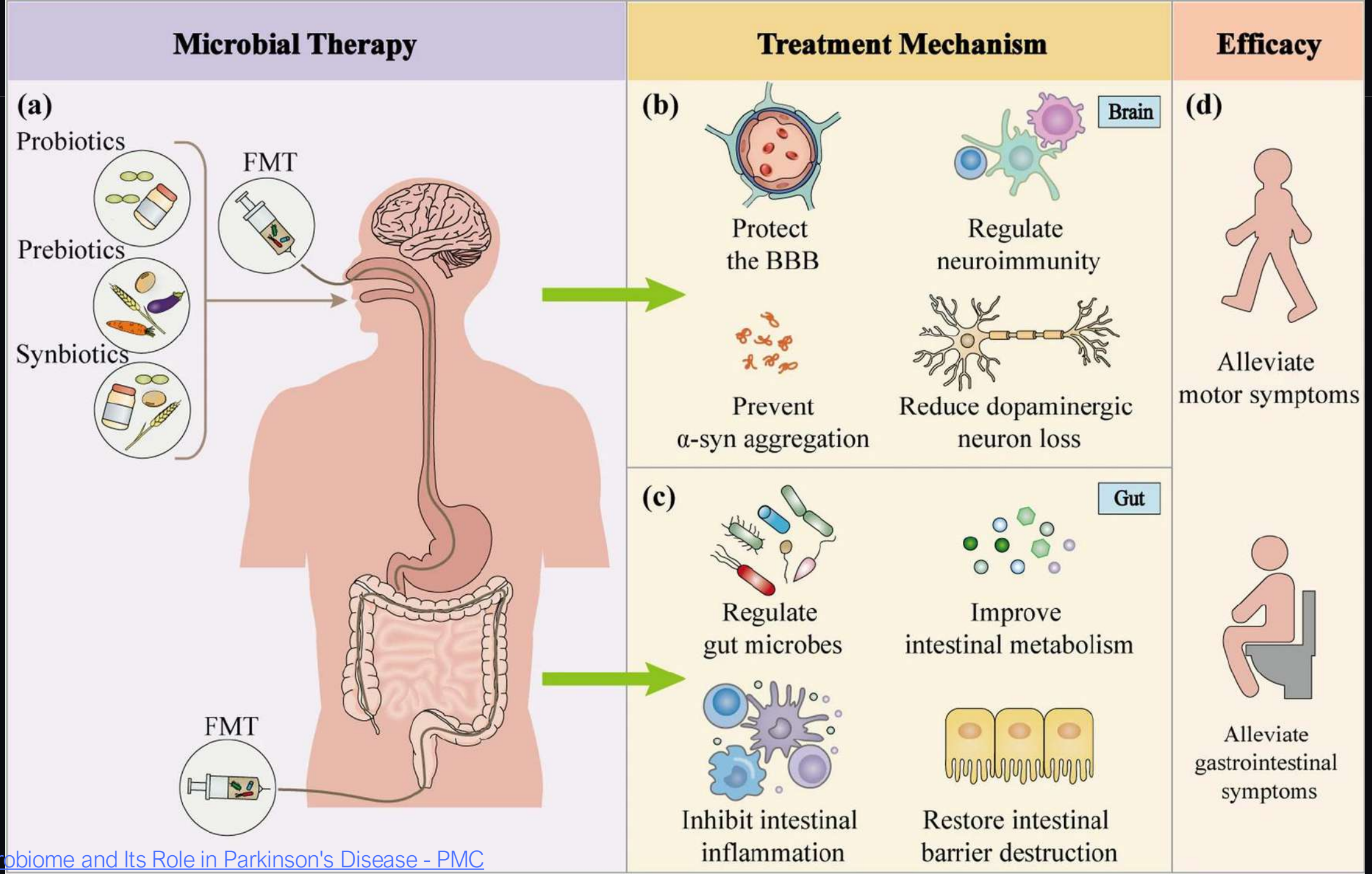
Sources: [6] [10] [12]

Key Microbiome Changes in Parkinson's

- **Loss of good bacteria:** Levels of anti-inflammatory, butyrate-producing bacteria like *Faecalibacterium*, *Roseburia*, and *Prevotellaceae* drop.
- **Rise in harmful bacteria:** Pro-inflammatory strains like *Akkermansia*, *Lactobacillus*, and *Proteobacteria* often increase.
- **Reduced short-chain fatty acids:** Lower butyrate leads to a weaker gut lining and chronic systemic inflammation. [[Parkinson's disease and gut microbiota: from clinical to mechanistic and therapeutic studies | Translational Neurodegeneration | Springer Nature Link](#)]

How the Gut Affects the Brain

- **Alpha-synuclein spread:** Misfolded proteins often appear in the gut's nervous system years before movement symptoms start and migrate to the brain.
- **Vagus nerve pathway:** The nerve acts as a physical highway connecting gut distress directly to central nervous system degeneration.
- **Medication interference:** Certain gut bacteria can metabolize Parkinson's drugs like **levodopa**, lowering how well the medication works. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#)]



Neuroprotection - Research into nuts and herbs has shown promise:

Walnuts. contain omega 3 and other minerals; early studies associate with decreased risk for dementia. Try 5-10/day

Pistachios. These nuts (the vitamin K and antioxidants) may potentially help reestablish lost connections between neurons. They also contain a small amount of lithium, which may help to improve mood. A few, 2-3 times a week

Macadamia nuts. Oils in these nuts may increase the production of neurotransmitters that help brain cells communicate with each other. They are high in calories, but a few a day is good for you.

Cashews. Iron, zinc and magnesium in cashews may boost serotonin and may reduce memory loss.

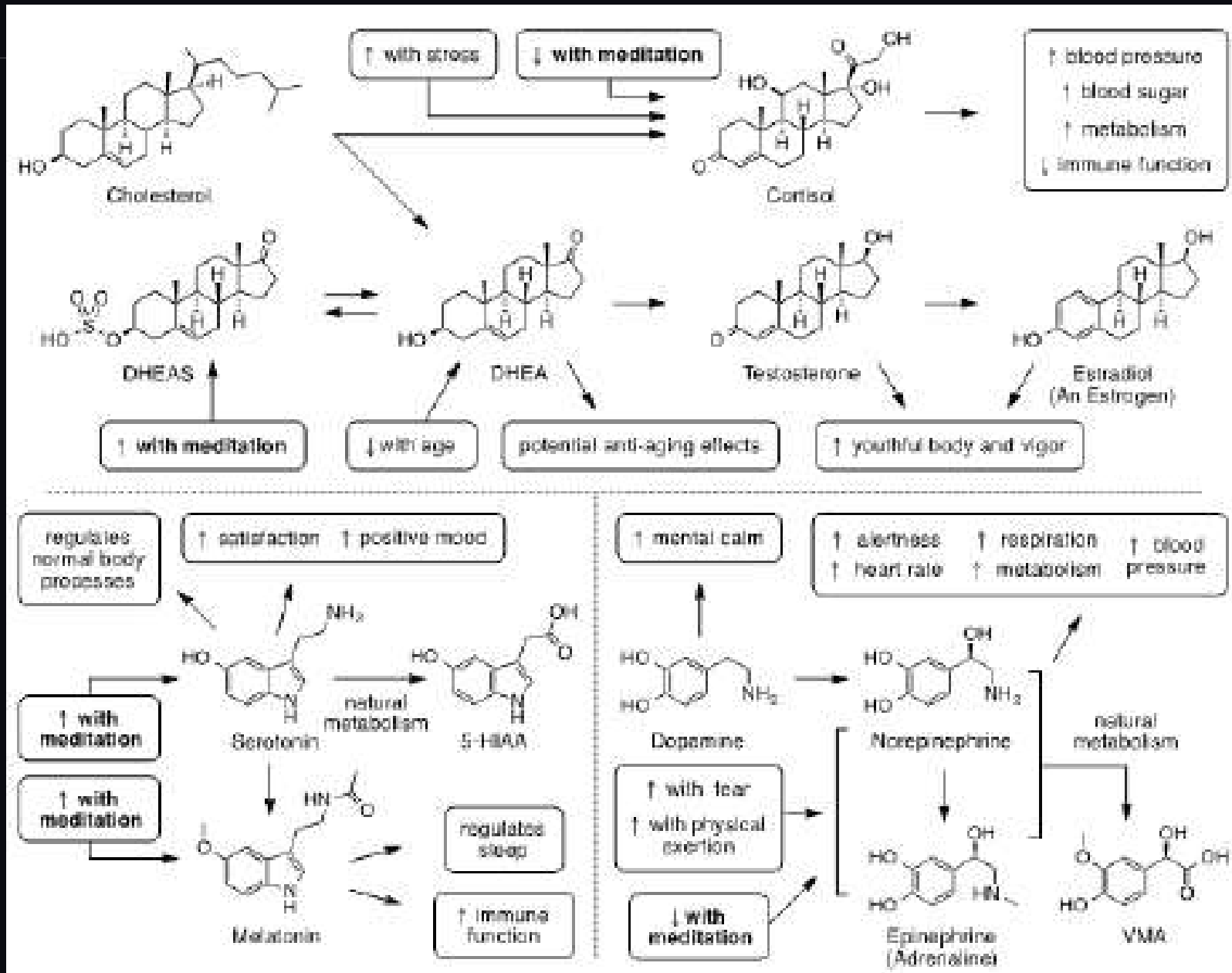
Almonds. Little effect on brain health, almonds contain fiber, which helps relieve constipation(common symptom in PD).

Brazil nuts. Contain selenium, that may have the potential to counteract environmental toxins like pesticides and herbicides. Eat no more than 1-2/day

Turmeric. Turns Indian food orange. Add tumeric to food, but don't take it as a supplement unless medically indicated

Ceylon cinnamon. In animal studies, this spice has shown potential for normalizing neurotransmitter levels and other PD brain changes. Organic cinnamon is also preferable.

Stress surges noradrenaline and cortisol, depleting remaining dopamine, worsening motor symptoms like tremors (81.8%), rigidity, and freezing, and shortening medication "off" periods. Chronic stress also increases neuroinflammation and accelerates dopamine cell strain, according to the [Michael J. Fox Foundation](#)



A pause can create room for connection

1

Pause

Sit securely and notice the support of the chair

2

Reflect

Let breathing stay natural and unforced

3

Connect

Think of someone who helps you feel supported

4

Act

Choose a small way to reach out later

An optional seated reset, with 30 seconds of quiet.

Online Resources for Caregivers:

Caring: www.caring.com

Family Caregiver Alliance: www.caregiver.org

National Alliance for Caregiving: www.caregiving.org

Resource for Care Partners: www.caregiving.com

CareGivers of People with Parkinson's (CARE):
www.pdcaregiver.org

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Long Term Care:
www.longtermcare.gov

Empower Parkinson: <https://empowerparkinson.org/>

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