



Health Bulletin



New Help For Parkinson's Disease

(NAPSA)—The first new drug for Parkinson's disease in more than three years is helping to provide patients with an improved ability to perform everyday tasks, such as walking and getting dressed. That is good news for the 1.5 million Americans who suffer from this chronic and progressive neurological condition, medical experts say.

While its cause is unknown, the symptoms of Parkinson's disease are primarily the result of the degeneration of dopaminergic cells, or neurons, in a part of the brain that controls and modulates movement. Symptoms include limbs that tremble, slowness of movement, stiffness of limbs and difficulty walking or balance problems. As the disease progresses, these symptoms usually increase and impact a person's ability to work and function.

While there is no cure for Parkinson's disease, many effective medications are now available to treat its symptoms. The most widely-used agent to treat the symptoms of the disease is a drug called levodopa, which has remained the "gold standard" of care for people with Parkinson's for nearly 40 years. The effects of levodopa tend to diminish or "wear off" over time.

When levodopa "wears off,"



A new drug can help to improve the ability to walk, dress and function for many Parkinson's patients.

patients find that their symptoms reappear before their next dose. Despite this fact, levodopa is still an effective agent in managing Parkinson's disease symptoms, and as a result, newer drugs are often used to extend its benefits.

A new option for these Parkinson's patients comes in the form of a new levodopa therapy called Stalevo™ (carbidopa, levodopa and entacapone) tablets.

Stalevo is a combination of levodopa and two other ingredients—carbidopa, which reduces the side

effects of levodopa; and entacapone, which extends levodopa's benefits. Stalevo is an enhanced levodopa therapy that significantly improves Parkinson's disease patients' ability to control body movements and the ability to perform basic functions such as walking and dressing.

"Wearing off" is a top challenge for Parkinson's disease patients and their doctors. When patients have hours of tremors, slowed movement and stiffness, this interferes with their ability to function normally. Many patients have to avoid daily activities like shopping or dining out because they are afraid they might freeze up when their medication wears off," explains William Koller, M.D., director of the Movement Disorder Center at New York's Mount Sinai Medical Center. "With Stalevo, people with Parkinson's disease who have 'wearing off' can expect more consistent and longer-lasting relief, which may help them to live more normal lives."

Stalevo simplifies treatment for many patients by providing three medications in one tablet, which reduces the number of tablets that patients need to take daily. For further information, consult your doctor, or call 1-866-STALEVO (866-782-5386).

Note to Editors: The effectiveness of levodopa administered with carbidopa and entacapone in the treatment of Parkinson's disease was established in three 24-week multicenter, randomized, double blind placebo-controlled trials in patients with Parkinson's disease experiencing "wearing off." In these trials, this combination increased "on" time (the period where patients experience no symptoms), reduced "off" time (the period where the patients' symptoms return) and improved motor function and daily activities such as patients' ability to walk and dress. The most common side effects of Stalevo therapy are dopaminergic in nature (e.g. dyskinesia, nausea). These side effects may be manageable with alteration in the drug dosing schedule. Other common side effects include diarrhea, hyperkinesias, urine discoloration, hypokinesia, abdominal pain, dizziness, constipation, fatigue, pain and hallucinations. For full prescribing information, visit www.stalevo.com or call 1-866-STALEVO (866-782-5386).