



APDA & Smart Patients FAQ

What is APDA's Smart Patients community?

This is an online discussion forum for people with Parkinson's disease and their loved ones. It is intended to foster connection and camaraderie between people with PD and care partners, no matter where they live.

[Smart Patients is free to join.](#)

Although APDA monitors the online community, we respond only periodically as the forum is intended as a space for the users to talk to each other, not for us to be talking to/at them.

What is the relationship between APDA and Smart Patients?

Since 2017, APDA has partnered with Smart Patients to offer a Parkinson's disease online community. Smart Patients provides the opportunity to extend APDA's reach and can serve as a great add-on to the in-person programs and support groups APDA provides. Smart Patients can also support people in areas where we do not have a physical presence.

The APDA Smart Patients online community offers **Ask the Expert** conversations, a feature with invited guest experts who interact with the APDA Smart Patients community over a couple of days on a particular topic. The **Ask the Expert** conversation is conducted in normal posts with members asking questions and getting answers from the visiting experts. The questions might be answered immediately or might have to wait until the experts sign back on. Once the experts leave, the conversation can continue among the members only. These continuing conversations, **Ask the Expert**, will be announced when scheduled.

How can Smart Patients benefit my local community of people with PD and care partners? How is Smart Patients different from my network of local PD support groups?

Support groups are a wonderful community resource. Many support groups meet once or twice a month. APDA's Smart Patients community provides a space for people to interact virtually every day, or every week, from the comfort of their homes. Smart Patients offers flexibility in people's busy lives. People can spend 5 minutes or 15 minutes reading and responding to community discussions. They can log in when it is convenient for them, whether at night or in the afternoon while their loved one is resting.

Smart Patients can be a great resource for local people with Parkinson's or care partners who are looking for the opportunity to meet others. It is a tool that can be useful for people who are looking for connections and support in between their regular support groups. It is also useful for those not interested in a traditional support group, or who cannot attend a support group due to time constraints or mobility issues. Some people may prefer expressing themselves in writing rather than in-person or virtual support group meetings.

You may receive calls and emails from people with Parkinson's and care partners from rural areas of your territory, or who do not live near a local PD or care partner support group. Smart Patients may be a good option for them. Smart Patients online community is currently only available in English.

How can I share information about APDA's Smart Patients community?

- 1) Include APDA's Smart Patients postcard among the APDA publications that you distribute via mail, and at local educational / health / wellness events. These are available on our storefront.
- 2) [Link to Smart Patients](#) in your weekly *News You Can Use* email.
- 3) Include Smart Patients on your Chapter website (there is a premade "block" within WordPress that you can easily add to your site if you have not already.)
- 4) When you receive calls from people seeking information, resources, programs, and support, let them know that Smart Patients is a tool that they can use to get connected with the PD and care partner community nationwide.
- 5) You can use the simplified URL www.apdaparkinson.org/smart-patients when needing to share it with others.