

Parkinson's, Caregivers, and Mealtime:

Why dining chairs need to swivel...turn...roll...and lock for safety

Caring for **someone living with Parkinson's** is a daunting challenge for both family members and professional caregivers. Mealtimes can be especially challenging as **persons with Parkinson's** are at risk of falling from the neurological disorder which causes uncontrolled movements including: shaking, stiffness and difficulty with balance and coordination.

The Challenge in the Dining Room



While the process of being seated at the table is routine for many of us, the process of seating a person with Parkinson's at the table involves two distinct and

separate steps that need to be understood by the family and caregiver.

Step 1: Getting seated in the chair

It is not uncommon for a person with Parkinson's to bump into furniture while attempting to get seated in a chair. This can have disastrous results, as any unintended contact with the chair can cause it to move unexpectedly, often resulting in a fall or injury.

Unfortunately, traditional chairs fail both seniors and caregivers



as a **standard dining chair** is not designed to move, putting the caregiver at risk of incurring a personal injury as a result of overexertion,

while...



the **office/task chair** is designed to roll too easily (not stable) putting the seated person at risk of incurring an injury due to a fall when the chair moves unexpectedly.

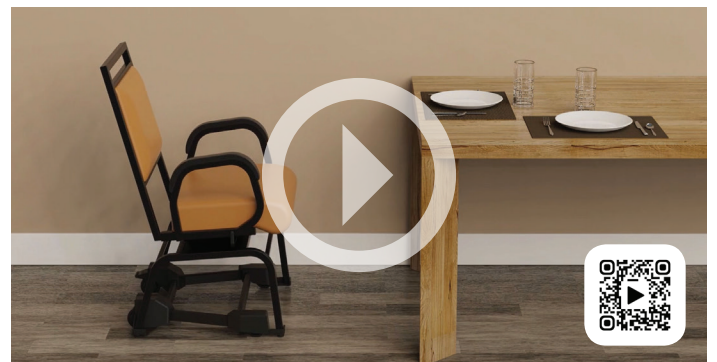
Step 2: Being moved up-to and away-from the table

Once seated, the physical demands required to move a seated person up to the table can be exhausting for the caregiver. Any activity which involves pushing, pulling, shoving, and twisting of the seated person serves only to increase mealtime stress and anxiety for both seated person and caregiver.

A Better Way

Dining chairs designed for today's seniors and caregivers must include features enabling the chair to **swivel...turn...roll...and lock** for safety, thereby reducing the risk of injury for both the seated person and the caregiver!

Chairs that **swivel** and **lock** eliminate table interference as the seat of the chair is swiveled 90 degrees away from the table.



Watch Video: <https://vimeo.com/707095958>

This allows full access to the seat of the chair for the person being seated. Once they are comfortably in the chair, they can release the swivel lock and rotate themselves towards the table.

Additionally, chairs that also roll and brake for safety can be moved even further from the table, providing increased clearance, should a second caregiver be required when transferring the person into the seat of the chair.

Once seated, they can be rotated back towards the table, and the caregiver effortlessly glides them into position at the table before securing the brakes.



Exiting the table: With the seat of the chair turned (90 degrees) away from the table, the seated person is also able to rise from the chair and walk directly away from the table.

This eliminates the need for the person to lean on the table and shuffle/pivot his/her feet as they reach for their walker.

Why is a heavier chair safer when caring for a person with Parkinson's?

At first glance, caregivers assigned the task of moving a seated person up to the table opt for a lightweight chair, thinking this will ease their effort when moving that person forward.

However, what they fail to appreciate is (a) once the person is seated, it is the total weight of the person and the chair that needs to be moved up-to the table, and (b) a lightweight chair tends to move prematurely, increasing the risk of injury to the person being seated.

Caregivers should consider selecting a chair designed both for stability and mobility. A **sturdy chair with arms** offers support as the person slowly lowers him/herself into the chair. A heavier chair provides increased stability and thus is less likely to move prematurely. Chairs fitted with lockable inline wheels provide needed mobility, enabling the caregiver to roll the seated person up-to the table with ease and grace.

Chairs that **Swivel...Turn...Roll...**and Brake for safety:

- provide those with Parkinson's a greater degree of dignity and self-worth
- eliminate the need for care partners to push-pull-shove-twist on a chair
- reduce mealtime stress and anxiety for both the seated person and the care partner
- create a more enjoyable mealtime routine for all

Chairs that Swivel...Turn...Roll eliminate table interference...



Traditional Seating



SEAT: Swivels
Locks - 90°



SEAT: Swivels
Locks - 90° **CHAIR:** Rolls (*In-line*)
Brakes

