PARKINSON DISEASE is a neurological disorder characterized by difficulty initiating and performing voluntary movements. Patients affected by PD often notice other symptoms including tremor (involuntary shaking) in the arms, legs, or face; decreased facial expression; decreased arm swing; shuffling gait; impairment of balance; and handwriting deterioration. Medications such as Levodopa (Sinemet) often help reduce PD symptoms. Despite the discovery of a connection between the loss of dopamine-producing cells in the brain and the onset of PD symptoms, the cause of PD remains unknown.

Because research has shown that inherited factors (genes) play a role in PD, the John P. Hussman Institute for Human Genomics (HIHG) is searching for genetic clues in the families of patients with PD. We are also investigating environmental exposures encountered by families with PD since a combination of both environmental and genetic risk factors may cause the disease.

PD is a complex disorder in which many different genes, or combination of genes, may be involved in each individual person. Because of this complexity, we need the help of as many families as possible to comprehensively investigate genetic factors of PD.
WHAT IS OUR RESEARCH GOAL?
The goal of this study is to discover the genetic factors that contribute to the cause of Parkinson Disease.

HOW CAN YOUR FAMILY HELP?
PD is a complex disorder that involves many genes. In order to detect these exact genes, many families are needed to participate in our study. These contributing factors may differ among individuals or families with PD. Our studies require the participation of many individuals to speed the pace of discovery. We currently need individuals with PD and their relatives to participate in our research study. In an effort to thoroughly investigate the genetic factors of PD, we are looking for one of two different types of families to participate:

We need families in which more than one living relative has been diagnosed with PD (such as siblings, cousins, or an aunt/uncle, niece/nephew of a diagnosed individual). Other family members who do not have PD are also encouraged to participate. We also need families in which one individual has been diagnosed with PD and has at least one living sibling not diagnosed with PD or who has both parents still living and not diagnosed with PD.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?
Participating individuals are asked to agree to provide or to participate in the following:
• A telephone interview
• A physical examination specific to parkinsonism for all participating family members
• A blood sample from all participating family members
• Permission to review the medical records of the individual(s) with PD
• A telephone interview with each participant to collect data on environmental factors that may be related to PD

WITH THE HELP OF INDIVIDUALS WITH PD AND THEIR FAMILIES, WE ARE WORKING HARD TO IDENTIFY PD GENETIC RISK FACTORS AS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS IMPROVED TREATMENT AND PREVENTION.

A member of the HIHG research team will come to the family’s home or to any location convenient for the participant(s) to obtain blood samples and to perform the examinations.

DO FAMILIES GET STUDY RESULTS?
Although we are unable to provide individual results to families, we send yearly newsletters about our research progress to all family participants. We hope that this research will help develop better diagnostics and treatments for PD. Your participation will make this goal a reality.

STUDY PARTICIPATION FACTS
• Participation is voluntary.
• There is no cost to participate.
• Travel is not required.
• All information is confidential.
• Participation will not affect your health care.

THE RESEARCH TEAM
We believe that diversity in areas of expertise is necessary to make this research project a success. Families, physicians, human geneticists, physician assistants, molecular biologists, and genetic counselors are all working in conjunction to find the genes that cause Parkinson disease. Jeffery M. Vance, Ph.D., M.D., a neurologist, human geneticist, and Director of the Morris K. Udall Parkinson’s Disease Research Center of Excellence, leads the PD research effort at the John P. Hussman Institute for Human Genomics.

CALL OUR TOLL-FREE NUMBER
877-686-6444