The following definitions provided courtesy of https://www.webmd.com

Glossary of Parkinson's Disease Terms (A – M):

Action tremor: Rhythmic, involuntary movement of a limb when movement is initiated (for example, when writing or lifting a cup). Not usually seen in the earlier stages of Parkinson's disease.

Agonist: A chemical or drug that turns on or activates a particular part of a cell that regulates it activity (receptor). For example, dopamine agonists used in the treatment of Parkinson's disease activate the dopamine receptors in the brain, resulting in improvement in symptoms.

Amantadine: A drug that improves the symptoms of Parkinson's by increasing the amount of a brain chemical called dopamine. Amantadine can reduce the involuntary movements of Parkinson's disease by acting on other brain chemicals as well.

Anticholinergic drugs (Artane, Cogentin): The group of drugs that decreases the action of the nerve chemical acetylcholine. These drugs may help reduce rigidity, tremor, and drooling in Parkinson's.

Apomorphine: A drug used to treat severe Parkinson's. It is a form of morphine that can increase the amount of dopamine available in the brain, thereby decreasing symptoms of Parkinson's.

Ataxia: Loss of balance.

Athetosis: Abnormal involuntary movements that are slow, repetitive, and sinuous.

Azilect: A once-daily drug that can be taken alone in early Parkinson's disease or with other medications as the disease progresses. Azilect slows the breakdown of the brain chemical dopamine. Early animal studies suggest Azilect may also slow progression of Parkinson's. Side effects include headache, joint pain, indigestion, and depression.

Basal ganglia or nuclei: These are structures located deep in the brain that are responsible for normal movement such as walking. The basal ganglia are made up of three main parts, the caudate nucleus, the putamen, and the globus pallidus.

Benign essential tremor: A condition characterized by tremor of the hands, head, voice, and other parts of the body. Essential tremor often runs in families and is sometimes called familial tremor. It is sometimes mistaken for a symptom of Parkinson's.

Beta-blockers: Drugs that block the action of the hormone epinephrine. Usually used to treat high blood pressure and heart disease, they may be effective in the treatment of benign essential tremor (see above).

Bilateral: Occurring on both sides of the body.

Blepharospasm: Spasms of the eyelid, spasmodic blinking, or involuntary closing of the eyelids.

Bradykinesia: Slowing down of movement. It is a major symptom of Parkinson's.

Carbidopa (Lodosyn): A drug that is usually given in combination with a Parkinson's drug called levodopa; the combination is called Sinemet. Carbidopa improves the effectiveness of levodopa and can be used to reduce the side effects of levodopa.

Chorea: A type of abnormal movement or dyskinesia, characterized by continuing, rapid, dance-like movements. May result from high doses of levodopa and/or long-term levodopa treatment.

Choreoathetosis: A type of abnormal movement or dyskinesia characterized by involuntary jerky snake-like movements usually of the arms.

Cogwheel rigidity: Stiffness in the muscles, with a jerky quality when arms and legs are repeatedly moved.

Constipation: Decreased ability of intestinal muscles to move stool through the bowels, often resulting in difficulty moving the bowels or in very hard stools.

Deep brain stimulation (DBS): A new surgical procedure that is very effective in treating Parkinson's disease. The surgery includes the implantation of permanent electrodes in various parts of the brain through which continuous pulses of electricity are given to control the symptoms of Parkinson's.

Dementia: The loss of some intellectual abilities, characterized by loss of awareness and confusion.

Deprenyl (Eldepryl, Selegiline, Jumex): A drug that slows the breakdown of important brain chemicals like dopamine. This medication may help slow the progression of Parkinson's disease early in the course of the illness.

Dopamine: A chemical produced by the brain; it assists in the effective transmission of messages from one nerve cell to the next. People with Parkinson's have decreased amounts of the chemical in the basal ganglia and substantia nigra, two structures located deep in the brain. Dopamine coordinates the actions of movement, balance, and walking.

Dopamine agonist: Drugs that copy the effects of the brain chemical dopamine and increase the amount of dopamine that is available to the brain for use.

Dysarthria: Speech difficulties due to impairment of the muscles associated with speech.

Dyskinesia: Abnormal muscle movements. May appear as a side effect of long-term drug treatment in Parkinson's and may worsen in response to stress. (See also Levodopa Induced Dyskinesia)

Dysphasia: Difficulty speaking.

Extrapyramidal nervous system: Refers to the basal ganglia and its connections, Mainly concerned with the regulation of automatic movements.

Festination: Walking in rapid, short, shuffling steps.

Flexion: A bent or curved posture.

Globus pallidus: A structure located deep in the brain in the inner part of the basal ganglia.

Hypokinesia: Decreased motor activity.

Idiopathic: An adjective meaning "of unknown cause." The usual form of Parkinson's is idiopathic Parkinson's.

Intention tremor: Tremor occurring when the person attempts voluntary movement.

Levodopa: A drug, containing a form of the important brain chemical dopamine, commonly used to treat symptoms of Parkinson's disease. Sinemet and Prolopa contain levodopa.

Levodopa-induced dyskinesias: A side effect of taking levodopa that may occur with prolonged use and is marked by abnormal, involuntary movements. Reducing the amount of levodopa may alleviate the side effect.

Lewy body: Brain cells that have abnormal pigmented spheres inside them. They are found in the damaged parts of the brain in people with Parkinson's disease.

Livido reticularis: A purplish or bluish coloration of the skin seen usually below the knee and on the forearm in persons treated with Symmetrel. This is usually a benign condition.

Lodosyn (Carbidopa): A drug that is usually given in combination with a Parkinson's drug called levodopa; the combination is called Sinemet. Carbidopa helps levodopa to be more effective and can be used to reduce the side effects of levodopa.

Mirapex (pramipexole): A newer dopamine agonist that is tolerated better and is more effective.

Micrographia: The tendency to have very small handwriting due to difficulty with fine motor movements in Parkinson's disease.

Myoclonus: Jerking, involuntary movement of arms and legs, usually occurring during sleep.