

# Discharge Instructions for Epilepsy



You have been diagnosed with epilepsy, a disorder of recurring seizures. When you have a seizure, an electrical disturbance happens in your brain. There are different kinds of seizures, and each person may have one or many types of seizures. Here are some guidelines for you and your family.

## If you have a seizure

Ask friends and family members to learn how to manage a seizure. Also tell them to do the following if you have a seizure:

- Clear the area to prevent injury.
- Position you on a flat, carpeted surface, if possible.
- Don't try to restrain you.
- Don't put anything in your mouth.
- Turn you onto your side if you start to vomit.
- Keep track of the date and time the seizure started, how long it lasted, if you lost consciousness, a description of your body movements, what provoked the seizure (if known), and any injuries you suffered. Using a watch may help you track the correct time of events.
- Stay with you until you regain consciousness.
- Call 911 if the seizure is longer than 5 minutes, if there are multiple seizures, or if you don't start to wake up after the seizure stops.

You'll probably be confused and drowsy after the seizure. Rest until you feel recovered enough to continue your pre-seizure activity.

## Activities

The following are some things to consider:

- Enjoy your normal activities. Most people with epilepsy lead normal lives.
- Don't do hazardous activities, such as mountain climbing or scuba diving. A seizure under these conditions could lead to a fatal accident.
- Many other activities can be very dangerous if you were to have a seizure. If you are on a ladder or roof or operating heavy equipment or sharp tools, you could be seriously injured. Talk with your healthcare provider about any activities you are unsure of.
- Don't swim alone or take part in other similar activities without others nearby.
- Ask your healthcare provider about any restrictions on driving or other activities.
- Check with your state department of public safety to learn whether there are any driving limits based on your condition. Each state has different laws on driving after seizures.

## Other home care

Other considerations:

- Take your medicine exactly as directed. Skipping doses can affect the way your body handles the medicine, which could cause you to have a seizure. Ask your healthcare provider what to do if you miss a dose of your medicine.
- Don't drink alcohol or use any medicine without talking with your provider first.
- Make sure all of your healthcare providers have a list of all your medicines. Seizure medicines may interact with other medicines.
- Carry an updated list of your medicines in your wallet or on your electronic device. Consider asking your partner or a close friend or family member to also have this information in case of an emergency.
- Keep an emergency supply of medicine in a "go bag" by your door in case of an emergency evacuation or natural disaster.
- When you travel, always bring an extra 3 to 5 days of medicine in case your plans unexpectedly change.
- Ask your healthcare provider what to do if you take birth control pills. They may not work as well when taking seizure medicines.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you are thinking about becoming pregnant.
- Think about how to keep small children safe if you are caring for them when you have a seizure.
- Plan ahead for what you and your family should do during a seizure and when to call 911. Create your own written plan so others know what to do if you have a seizure and how to prevent emergencies.
- Wear a medical alert pendant or bracelet that alerts others to your condition. The ID should include any medicine allergies.
- Join a local support group. Ask your provider for names and phone numbers. The Epilepsy Foundation <https://www.epilepsy.com/> offers both online support and information on local resources.
- Talk with your healthcare provider if you are trying to become pregnant. Some medicines for treating epilepsy and seizures can cause birth defects when taken during pregnancy. Folic acid may reduce the risk for some of these birth defects. Ask your provider if you should take folic acid or take other precautions.

Being diagnosed with epilepsy can be a life-altering situation. While it can be medically managed, it can also interfere with some career plans or recreational activities. Don't hesitate to seek professional counseling support to help adjust to the diagnosis and manage the possible changes it brings.

## Call 911

Tell your family members or friends to call 911 right away if you have:

- A seizure that lasts more than 5 minutes
- Multiple seizures in a row
- Not regained consciousness after the seizure stops

## When to call your healthcare provider

You or your family members or friends should call your provider right away if you have:

- Seizures that are getting longer and worse
- Seizures that are different from those you've had in the past
- Questions about missed medicines or medicine interactions

- Seizures strong enough to cause injury
- Medicine side effects
- Skin rash
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Symptoms get worse or you have new symptoms

© 2000-2027 The StayWell Company, LLC. All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions  
This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your Healthcare professional's instructions. Copyright Krames LLC.