

Epilepsy (Child)



Epilepsy: What is it and who has it?

People who have epilepsy have seizures. A seizure happens when the brain does not work as it should. If you have more than one seizure a doctor may tell you that you have epilepsy.

Millions of people in the world have epilepsy. There are different reasons why people may have it. Sometimes, more than one person in the same family can have it. It can also start after a head wound or an illness. The doctor may not be able to tell you why you have it because many times the reason is not known.

What happens when you have a seizure?

Not all seizures are like what you may have seen or heard about. The brain tells the body how to move, feel, and see. When you have a seizure in a part of the brain, you may lose control of your body. Seizures can happen the same or they can change. A seizure can cause a person to:

- Shake or jerk the body
- Blink or move eyes
- Laugh, cry, or scream
- Stare like daydreaming
- Have a hard time breathing
- Smell, hear, or see things
- Pass out
- Smack the lips, drool, or bite the tongue
- Stiffen the body
- Run, walk, or move (without wanting to)
- Throw up or have a stomach ache
- Mix up words

After you have a seizure, you may feel very sleepy, scared, or weak. You could also be hurt if you fell down during the seizure. If your body or head hurts then you need to tell someone.

Should I talk about my epilepsy?

It is very helpful if you are open about having epilepsy with loved ones and teachers. You may feel scared about having a seizure in front of people but when your friends and family know this, they can be there for you. People will learn what to do for you and others during a seizure.

You may feel sad or mad that you have to make changes in your life, but it helps to talk about how to deal with these changes. Telling people may also make you feel like you are not hiding a secret.

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It can help you do better in school if you tell your teachers about things that cause your seizures. It will help others know why you take medicine at times. Counselors and teachers in school can help with resources for college and getting more time on tests.

How to talk about Epilepsy with friends:

Tell your friends that you have seizures sometimes. Your friends may have other things like allergies or asthma and they may want to talk about this with you.

If you are comfortable, you can tell them about your epilepsy and the types of seizures you have. This will help them know when you are having a seizure and when they need to get you help.

Tell your friends that they cannot “catch” this from you. You can explain that it is a medical condition.

You can tell your friends that having epilepsy does not mean that you can't play with them and you can still have fun! It is good to talk about things that may cause you to have seizures, so they understand your triggers (signs to look for before you have a seizure).

Bullying

Sometimes kids feel uncomfortable when they see something that is new or different. They may bully you because they do not know what you are going through. If someone is bullying, don't stand for it. Find a friend, like a teacher, that can help you with this. There are many programs to stop bullying in school.

Talking about epilepsy with people may help to stop bullying because it helps others know what you are going through

Do not stop taking your medicine if people are teasing you about it.

Tell your parents if you are being bullied.

If you want to learn more, you can look at these websites:

- <http://talkaboutit.org/>
- <https://www.epilepsy.com/>
- <https://www.epilepsy.com/connect/forums/teen-zone>
- <https://www.facebook.com/YouthInEpilepsy/>
- <https://www.stopbullying.gov/>

Who do I contact at CHLA if I need more information?

Please call the Neurology Clinic at 323-361-2471

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