

Discharge Instructions for Epilepsy (Child)



Your child has been diagnosed with epilepsy. This is a disorder with recurrent, unprovoked seizures. Seizures are brief electrical disturbances in the brain. Seizures are often focal and include twitching, numbness, or tingling of the child's face or tongue and may interfere with speech and cause drooling. There are different kinds of seizures, and each child's seizures are unique. Here's what you need to know about home care.

General guidelines

- Help your child enjoy normal activities. Most children with epilepsy lead normal lives.
- Educate family members, friends, and your child's teachers about epilepsy and your child's seizures. Tell them what to do and what not to do when your child has a seizure.
- Note any things that might trigger a seizure. These could include a fever, illness, not getting enough sleep, menstrual periods, or flashing lights.
- Ask your child's healthcare provider about any restrictions on your child's activities.
- Don't let your child swim alone or take part in other similar activities without others nearby.
- Stay nearby when your child is bathing. Always help younger children at bathtime. A child can drown in just a few inches of water. Showers are a better choice for children with seizures.
- Give your child their medicine exactly as directed. Skipping doses can alter the blood levels of the medicine and may cause a seizure. Use a pill case and set an alarm on your cellphone or computer to help you remember. If you miss giving a dose to your child, check with their provider about what to do.
- Don't give your child any over-the-counter medicine without talking with your provider first.
- If your child has prolonged seizures or clusters of seizures, talk with their provider about rescue seizure medicines and when to call **911**.
- Give your child a medical alert pendant to wear. Ask your provider how to get one if you aren't sure.
- Learn CPR.
- Teens with epilepsy should not drive. Check your state's driving regulations for specific rules.
- Work with your child's school to make an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) if your child has special needs related to their epilepsy.
- Learn about protections against discrimination. Section 504 of the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) both offer protections for a person with epilepsy in school settings and public places.

Protecting your child during a seizure

Take the following steps to protect your child when they have a seizure:

- Stay calm, and stay with your child.
- Time how long the seizure lasts. Have someone call 911 if the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes. Don't leave your child alone.
- Do what you can to prevent injury. Don't restrain movement, because this can actually cause injury to

you or your child.

- Move sharp or hard objects away from your child.
- Place a flat, soft object under your child's head to cushion it.
- Attempt to roll your child onto their side.
- Loosen tight clothing.
- Don't put anything in your child's mouth and don't try to hold their tongue. It's impossible to swallow the tongue.
- Don't give your child oral medicines or liquids during a seizure.
- Don't panic. It's normal to turn slightly blue or pale during a seizure. And in most cases, seizures last fewer than 3 minutes. They usually just stop on their own. If the seizure doesn't stop on its own and your provider has prescribed a rectal rescue medicine, give it to your child as prescribed.

After your child has a seizure

Right after a seizure happens:

- Let your child sleep after a seizure. It's normal for them to be sleepy.
- Keep in mind that your child may look and act confused. They may not remember what happened.
- Tell your child's healthcare provider after every seizure.

Maintaining a normal family life

Here are some ways to help support your child and have a healthy family life for the long term:

- Help your child to make friends.
- Continue family activities and traditions.
- Make time for yourself without feeling guilty. When you take care of yourself, you are better able to care for your child.
- Build a support network for you and your child. Ask your child's provider for local or online resources. And find your local [Epilepsy Foundation chapter at www.epilepsy.com/local](http://www.epilepsy.com/local).
- Establish routines. Routines, schedules, and structure are what keep all busy families going.

Follow-up

- Make a follow-up appointment.
- Keep all scheduled appointments with your child's healthcare provider even if seizures are controlled. Regular visits will help to find any side effects your child may be having from the medicine.
- Talk to your child's provider about any concerns.

When to call your child's healthcare provider

Call the healthcare provider right away if your child has any of these:

- Seizures happen more often, last longer, or look different than those your child has had in the past

- Trouble breathing
- Rash
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as advised by your child's provider
- New behavioral or cognitive symptoms

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