



Prepare before you go to your provider's office. Check off the statements that apply to you and discuss with your provider.

### Since my last visit:

- I have had seizures.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- My seizures have changed.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I have felt moody or blue some of the time.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I am pregnant or I plan to become pregnant.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I have made progress on my goals for managing epilepsy.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I have missed taking some of my medicine(s).  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I have stopped or changed how I take my medicine.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- My medicine has caused side effects that bother me.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I have had trouble paying for my medicine.  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Bring this list with you to each provider visit.
- Bring all your medicines with you to each visit, including vitamins and supplements.



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## ABOUT EPILEPSY



**Your Treatment & You:  
Working Together to Help  
Manage Your Health**







# Epilepsy—What Is It?

“The doctor says I have epilepsy. I don’t know what to do.”

To help you deal with your feelings and help you manage your seizures, learn more about epilepsy and what you can do to help manage it.

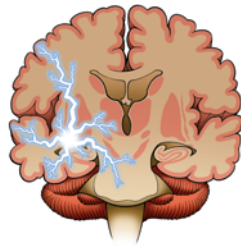
### • What is epilepsy?

Having epilepsy means that you are likely to have at least two or more unprovoked seizures. A seizure is a sudden burst of electrical signals in the brain. This sudden electrical activity can change the way you act, feel, and move and can make some people unconscious.

### • What do seizures feel like and how do they affect me?

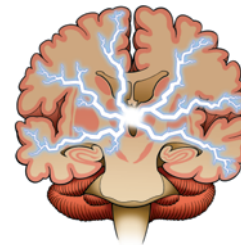
The symptoms of a seizure depend on where in the brain it occurs. There are two main kinds of seizures:

- **Focal seizures** occur in just one part of the brain. They may cause unusual sensations or repeated movements and twitches. They may also cause a loss of consciousness.



Burst of electrical signals spreads in one part of brain

- **Generalized seizures** start and spread in both sides of the brain. They may cause loss of consciousness. One type (tonic-clonic) can cause a person to become stiff, pass out, and shake all over.



Burst of electrical signals spreads in both sides of brain



## Talking With Healthcare Team

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

7 My doctor/nurse and I work together to make decisions.

Rating scale with 5 circles

## Behavior



## Taking Medicines

In the last week In the last month In the last 3 months More than 3 months ago Never

### Have You...

8 Taken a medicine more or less often than prescribed?

Rating scale with 5 circles

9 Skipped or stopped taking a medicine because you didn’t think it was working?

Rating scale with 5 circles

10 Skipped or stopped taking a medicine because it made you feel bad?

Rating scale with 5 circles

11 Skipped, stopped, not refilled, or taken less medicine because of the cost?

Rating scale with 5 circles

12 Not had medicine with you when it was time to take it?

Rating scale with 5 circles

If you checked any answers in the darker blue boxes, talk with your healthcare provider.



# Taking Medicine— What Gets In The Way?

Think about all of the medicines you take. Mark one answer for each item below.

## Inconvenience/Forgetfulness



### Lifestyles

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

1 I just forget to take my medicines some of the time.

2 I run out of my medicine because I don't get refills on time.

3 Taking medicines more than once a day is inconvenient.

## Treatment Beliefs



### Attitudes and Beliefs

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

4 I feel confident that each one of my medicines will help me.

5 I know if I am reaching my health goals.


### Help From Others

6 I have someone I can call with questions about my medicines.

“Doctors can't cure epilepsy. So why do I need medicine every day?”

Epilepsy can be a lifelong illness. But there are medicines that can help reduce the frequency of seizures. This is important because even a single seizure can increase the risk of injury or death. To help manage your epilepsy:



**Take** your medicine as directed by your provider.



**Keep** all your provider appointments.



**Learn** what brings on your seizures, such as:

- Missing a dose of medicine
- Lack of sleep
- Illness or fever
- Stress
- Too much alcohol
- Street drug use
- Flashing lights
- Hormonal changes in women



**Plan** ahead to try to avoid the things that bring on your seizures.

*The goal of epilepsy treatment is to reduce seizures with the fewest possible side effects. Use a goal checklist and talk to your healthcare provider.*



## My Epilepsy Goals— What Are They?

You are the most important person in managing your epilepsy. Talk with your provider to help you choose one or more goals you are ready to work on now. Place a check next to your goals below.

### Goal 1



#### Provider Visits

- I will keep my provider appointments even when I feel fine.
- I will ask my provider questions when I do not understand something.
- I will make sure I have a way to get to my appointments if I am not able to drive.

### Goal 2



#### Medicine

- I will take my epilepsy medicine(s) as directed by my provider.
- I will call my provider if I have problems.

### Goal 3



#### Triggers

- I will try to avoid things that can bring on my seizures.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**For more help and information, contact the Epilepsy Foundation:**

#### Epilepsy Foundation

[www.epilepsyfoundation.org](http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org)

800-332-1000

*Click on "Get Involved" to learn more about how to get involved.*

*Click on "Find Us In Your Area," then select your State or enter your Zip Code.*

The resource listed above is administered by an independent third party not affiliated with or endorsed by GSK. GSK is not responsible for the content of this resource.

**To learn more about what may be getting in the way of taking your medicine, go to [www.HealthCoach4Me.com](http://www.HealthCoach4Me.com).**



## Epilepsy Support— Where Can I Go for Help?

“I feel all alone in treating my epilepsy.”

- Ask a family member or friend to support you, such as going with you to your next provider visit.
- Ask your provider about a support group for people with epilepsy.

*If you aren't sure what kind of things you can continue to do:*

- Talk with your provider about limits on your activities.
- Most people with epilepsy can continue to work. Talk to your provider.
- You may be able to continue to drive if your seizures are well controlled. States have different driving rules for people with epilepsy.
  - Check with your provider or Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for the rules in your state.
  - You can also visit the Epilepsy Foundation Web site to learn more: [www.epilepsyfoundation.org](http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org).

*If you have trouble paying for your medicine:*

- If you have Medicare or think you may be eligible for Medicare, call 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227), or visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).
- For information on Medicaid, contact your state Medicaid agency.

### Goal 4



#### Daily Life

- I will keep a regular schedule. This includes eating well and getting enough sleep.
- I will ask my provider what types of exercise are good and safe for me.
- I will make time for myself and learn how to reduce stress.

### Goal 5



#### Asking for Help

- I will talk with friends and family about how having epilepsy makes me feel.
- I will join an epilepsy support group.
- I will let my provider know if I feel moody, blue, or stressed.

### Goal 6



#### Seizure First Aid

- I will make sure that my friends and family know what to do if I have a seizure:
  - Keep calm.
  - Make sure I am comfortable and safe from harm.
- I will talk with my provider about when to call 911.
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#### *Have you felt moody or blue?*

*It is common for people with chronic conditions, such as epilepsy, to feel moody or blue from time to time. If these feelings continue, you may lose interest in the things you used to like to do. Or you may have problems sleeping and working. The good news is that you don't have to deal with these feelings by yourself. Talk to your provider, family, and friends for help.*



## Epilepsy Medicines— What Should I Know?

There are many types of epilepsy medicines. Epilepsy medicines often affect people differently. It may take some time to find the right medicines for you.

### *Give your medicine time to work for you!*

- Your provider may start you off with a low dose. Over time, your provider may slowly raise the dose until it reaches a good level for you.
- Your provider may first try to manage your seizures with one medicine. But sometimes two or more medicines are needed. Your provider may order blood tests on a regular basis. These tests will check blood levels of your epilepsy medicines or check on your liver or kidneys.

### “I stop taking my medicine if it makes me feel worse.”

- Epilepsy medicines have side effects. Tell your provider about any side effects you have—some may be signs of serious health problems. Some can be managed or may go away over time.
- Keep talking to your provider. Your provider may need to prescribe a different type of medicine.
- DO NOT stop taking your medicine or change the amount you are taking unless instructed to do so by your provider. Serious seizures may occur.

### *Questions to Ask My Provider:*

- What is the name of the medicine and how will it help me?

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- How and when do I take the medicine(s), and for how long?

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- When and how do I refill my prescription?

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- What do I do if I miss a dose?

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- What are the possible side effects? What should I do if they occur?

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- Will this medicine affect my other medicines (including over-the-counter) for epilepsy or for other conditions?

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- What are my limitations at work or at home?

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## My Healthcare Provider Visits— How Can I Get Ready?

You and your provider are a team in managing your epilepsy. Talk openly and honestly with your provider.

“*I don't feel right asking my doctor some questions.*”

- All questions are important. Do not be afraid to speak up if you do not understand something.
- Review the checklist on the next page before each provider visit.
- Your provider can help you with your treatment plan. Call your provider if you have any problems or if you have questions about your treatment plan.
- Consider asking a family member to join you on provider visits. They can take notes.

*If you have trouble understanding or remembering what your provider says:*

- Ask your provider to repeat anything you don't understand.
- Ask for written information about your medicine. Is it available in large print or another language?

***Plan ahead for your healthcare provider visit. Make sure you have a way to get to your appointment.***

“*My seizures have stopped. I don't need to take my medicine anymore.*”

- Taking your medicine as instructed by your provider may be why you have not had a seizure. You need to keep taking your medicine to help reduce seizures as much as possible.

### *For Women*

- Talk to your provider before you become pregnant AND right after you find out.
- Tell your provider if:
  - ① You are planning a pregnancy
  - ② You are pregnant
  - ③ You are planning to nurse
  - ④ You are nursing
- Talk to your provider if you plan to start or stop taking birth control pills. Many epilepsy medicines can affect how birth control pills work. Birth control pills can also affect how many epilepsy medicines work. Your provider may need to adjust one or more of your medicines.

***Fill out a medicine chart with the help of your healthcare provider. It is important to discuss this chart at every visit.***







## Sticking With My Medicine— What Will Work?

Taking your epilepsy medicine as directed by your provider is one of the most important things you can do to help manage epilepsy.



### **Not taking your epilepsy medicine as directed by your provider means:**

- Your medicine may not work the way it should.
- You may have more seizures.

“*I’m so busy. It’s hard for me to keep track of my medicine.*”

Taking one or more medicines at different times each day can be difficult. The key is to create a routine that fits your life:

- Try taking your epilepsy medicine around the same time as other daily habits, such as in the morning when brushing your teeth or in the evening around dinnertime.
- Ask if your medicine should be taken with or without food. Talk to your provider about a routine.
- If you have trouble remembering to take your medicine, ask your provider if there is a medicine that you can take less often. A simpler medicine schedule may help you.

### **If you often forget to take your medicine:**

- Ask your pharmacist if it is okay to use a pillbox marked with the days of the week to store your medicine. If it is okay, you can take it with you when you are away from home.
- Wear a watch. Set an alarm. Leave yourself a note on the bathroom mirror.
- Keep your epilepsy medicine in a place where you will see it every day.



### **If you forget to refill your medicine on time:**

- Write “refill medicine” on your calendar about a week before your medicine will run out.
- Make sure you have enough refills to last until your next provider visit.
- Ask your pharmacy to send you reminders to refill your prescription.



***Use a seizure calendar to keep track of your seizures. Bring your calendar with you to each provider visit.***