

Epilepsy problem page answers

I've been ignoring his texts.

Dear X,

It sounds like your friend had a tonic clonic seizure in the park last week. You don't need to feel bad about being scared; seeing somebody have a seizure, especially for the first time, can be a scary and very unsettling experience. You did the right thing by getting somebody else to help you, well done!

Epilepsy can be different for each person who has it and so you should ask your friend what usually happens when he has a seizure so that you know what to expect if it happens again. Knowing what to do when somebody has a seizure can help you feel more prepared and less likely to panic. Here are some general tips about what to do:

- Clear objects out of the way so he has room to move without banging against anything.
- Cushion the impact between him and hard surfaces, for example put something soft between his head and the floor and between him and a wall.
- Time how long the seizure continues for.
- Get an adult to help you.
- Call an ambulance if he injures himself or if the seizure carries on for more than 5 minutes.
- When the jerking has stopped, roll him onto his side and let him rest.
- Talk to him throughout the seizure, reassuring him it will be okay.
- Call his mum or dad and tell them what has happened.

Your friend is probably as upset about this as you are and may even be a bit embarrassed too. Be honest and say you haven't text yet because you were unsure about what to say and needed time to think. Explain that you would feel much better if you knew a bit more about his epilepsy and how to help if he needs it. Your friend will probably feel much more confident getting on with his life and being active if he knows he has friends like you around him who understand about his epilepsy.

I hope this helps,

Charlie.



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My boyfriend won't talk to me about his epilepsy!

Dear Catrina,

I am sorry to hear you are having problems with your boyfriend.

Epilepsy is a medical condition that affects approximately 63,000 children and young people in the UK aged 18 and under. People with epilepsy can experience sudden bursts of electrical activity in their brain - this is called a seizure. Seizures can disrupt the way a person's brain works; making their behaviour or the way they feel change for a short time. This can occur suddenly and they are unable to stop it from happening. There are lots of different types of seizures and each person will experience something unique to them. Read pages 2-3 of Young Epilepsy's 'All about epilepsy' magazine to learn more about seizures.

Seizures often come without warning and although he may be taking medication which helps to prevent seizures, he may still be worried in case he has one and how you might react. If you don't think he is ready to listen, why don't you try writing him a note saying that it's okay if he doesn't want to talk about his epilepsy yet, but when he is you are ready to listen? Tell him you'd like to know about it so that you can understand how it affects him and know how to help him if he needs it.

Good luck,

Charlie.



Epilepsy problem page answers

My parents are treating me like a prisoner!

Dear R,

Nearly everyone your age thinks their parents are horribly overprotective. Letting go is difficult for any parent, and is likely to be even harder if they're worried about safety issues to do with your epilepsy. Try talking to them about this at a calm time, not in the middle of an argument! Remind them that independence and an active social life are what everyone your age wants and needs. Explain that the fewer restrictions put on you because of your epilepsy the less likely you are to feel isolated from your friends and become withdrawn.

Boring as this may sound, you're far more likely to get a bit of independence once they're confident you fully understand the importance of taking care of yourself, and can be trusted to do so in any company. Here are a few things you could do that might help:

- Ask your parents to talk to your friends' parents so that they are aware of your epilepsy and know what to do if you have a seizure.
- Agree to give them a call or send them a text in the evening to reassure them you are okay.
- Talk to your friends and make sure they know what to do if you have a seizure.
- Make sure your friends and their parents have your parent's telephone number in case of emergency.

If you can't persuade them after a couple of calm discussions, perhaps you could meet them half way and agree to have the sleepover at your house - I'm sure your friends would understand if you explained the reasons why. Then next time, you could try again and suggest that you can be trusted to stay at someone else's house.

All the best,

Charlie.



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Should I tell them about my epilepsy?

Dear X,

Firstly, I'd like to say well done for getting the football trial! Epilepsy should not be a barrier to your success and in fact lots of successful sportsmen and women have epilepsy – including Olympic hurdler Dai Greene and Brentford United footballer Leon Legge.

I understand your concerns about telling the club; however, because epilepsy is covered by discrimination laws, it is actually against the law to discriminate against people because of their epilepsy.

You may be asked to complete a health questionnaire before your trial and interview; however you do not have to declare your epilepsy unless it is likely to prevent you from doing the job. If your seizures are well controlled with medication, then this is unlikely to be the case. If it comes up at the interview, you should answer honestly and this will give you a chance to explain how you manage your epilepsy. If they don't bring the subject up, you don't need to mention it at the interview unless you want to. However, if you are successful at the trial, your cousin is right in that it would be a good idea to explain about your epilepsy before you start so that they are aware of how to help in case you need it.

I have my fingers crossed!

Charlie.

