

Key information about epilepsy

What is epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a medical condition that affects the brain and can sometimes stop the body from working the way it should.

Your brain works by sending and receiving information in the form of electrical messages. People with epilepsy experience sudden and uncontrolled bursts of electrical activity in their brain – called a seizure.



Did you know?

Over 60,000 people under the age of 18 in the UK have epilepsy

What happens during a seizure?

Seizures interfere with the way the brain works for a short time. During this time, the person's behaviour may change or they may experience a strange sensation of some kind. They cannot stop what is happening and must wait for their brain to sort out the disruption.

Some seizures affect the whole of the brain while others may only affect a part of it.

Depending on the type of seizure, a person may become unconscious or may have difficulty with other things, like speech, movement or touch.

Can you stop seizures from happening?

People with epilepsy usually take special tablets everyday called anti-seizure medication.

These are meant to stop seizures from happening, or at least make them happen less often or last a shorter time.

The tablets can make some children feel unwell, such as feeling tired, dizzy or sick.

Getting enough sleep and avoiding stress can sometimes reduce the amount of seizures a person has.

How you can help

Seeing somebody have a seizure can be scary, confusing and very unsettling. However, knowing what to do will help you stay calm and give you peace of mind. The person with epilepsy will also feel much more confident getting on with life if the people around them know how to help!

DO

1. Call for help
2. Cushion their head
3. Time how long the seizure lasts
4. Move nearby objects away
5. When shaking has stopped, place them on their side
6. Talk to them during the seizure
7. Stay with them until they are OK
8. Call 999 if the seizure lasts more than 5 minutes or they have injured themselves

DON'T

1. Panic
2. Move the person (unless there is unavoidable danger)
3. Restrain the person
4. Try to wake them up

