

The International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) is a group of epilepsy clinicians from around the globe who work together to increase understanding and knowledge about epilepsy; working to improve epilepsy care across the world.

Back in 1981, they created a method for categorising (or classifying) different seizure types to help clinicians diagnose and treat their epilepsy patients. It helped to name and group different seizure types and is used worldwide. In 2017 the ILAE revised their classification to reflect the improved knowledge about the different types of seizures & to better support clinicians and their patients in understanding their epilepsy.

The classification acts as a guideline to help clinicians identify different seizure types which helps them provide medication and treatment to specifically suit different types of seizures.

This is important as we know that gaining control over seizures, and working towards seizure freedom if possible, is one of the best ways for someone with epilepsy (and their clinician) to reduce risks linked to the condition

The Table below shows the new classifications clinicians will use, and they may mention them during consultations. This doesn't mean you need to change what you call your seizures, but if you hear your seizures being described differently by your clinician, this may be why, and you should ask them to explain the changes and what they mean to you and your epilepsy management.

ILAE 2017 Classification of Seizure Types Expanded Version ¹

Focal Onset		Generalised Onset	Unknown Onset
Aware	Impaired Awareness	Motor tonic-clonic clonic tonic myoclonic myoclonic-tonic-clonic myoclonic-atonic atonic epileptic spasms Nonmotor (absence) typical atypical myoclonic eyelid myoclonia	Motor tonic-clonic epileptic spasms Nonmotor behaviour arrest
Motor Onset automatisms atonic ² clonic epileptic spasms ² hyperkinetic myoclonic tonic Nonmotor Onset autonomic behaviour arrest cognitive emotional sensory			
focal to bilateral tonic-clonic			

More information can be found at: www.ilae.org