

Your brain

Your brain works like a computer and is your body's control centre. It sends and receives messages to and from your body. Those messages are like little electrical signals and make you move, feel, think and operate almost everything that happens to your body.



What is epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a disease of the brain. Someone with epilepsy will have seizures sometimes. Most people with epilepsy take medicine to help stop the seizures from happening.

How do seizures happen?

A seizure happens when the brain cells don't work the way they are supposed to. Usually, the electrical signals in the brain are balanced. Seizures happen when too many electrical signals are sent all at once and the messages get mixed up.

- Seizures are a bit like an electrical storm, short circuit or glitch in the brain.
- Seizures make your body not to work the way it should, but just for a short time.
- Seizures don't make you sick and people with epilepsy usually feel just as healthy as everyone else.

What do seizures look like?

Seizures can cause different things to happen to your body. There are lots of different types of seizures - not everyone has the same kind.

These are some things that might happen:

- You might 'black out' or not know what's happening around you
- You might just stare into space for a few seconds
- Your whole body might jerk or shake without you wanting it to
- You might fall down
- Your muscles may become really stiff
- You might move around as if you were sleep walking
- Things may look, sound, or feel strange to you

When a seizure stops, the brain cells go back to working the right way again. But you may be tired or sore and even feel like sleeping afterwards.

Epilepsy and seizure medicines

Your doctor will give you medicine to take every day to try and stop the seizures happening. You might need to try more than one medicine before you find the right one. Sometimes not all the seizures can be stopped. Sometimes medicine can make you see double, feel dizzy, sick or tired, especially when you first start it. If you feel different or bad, tell your parents or doctor and changes might be made.

Being healthy helps seizures

If you have epilepsy, it's always good to be healthy. This means getting enough sleep, being active and eating good food, most of the time.

If you worry a lot or get stressed, this can make seizures happen. Learning to relax and not stress about things also helps you stay healthy. There are lots of apps to help you relax. [Smiling Mind](#) is a good one and its free.

Being healthy makes your body stronger and can help keep the seizures away

Having fun

Having seizures doesn't mean you can't do things but you sometimes might need to make a few changes to be safe. You should also enjoy activities like other people.

You should be able to do things like play sports, go to the movies or go swimming, so long as there is someone with you to make sure you are safe in the water. Your doctor will be able to talk to you about different activities you can do safely.

Friends

Your friends might not know much about epilepsy, but it's great if they can learn so they are not afraid and can help if you have a seizure. This video might help explain, [click here](#)

You can also tell them...

- epilepsy is when someone has seizures sometimes,
- you can't catch epilepsy, and no-one can catch it from you,
- epilepsy can be treated with medicine to help stop the seizures,
- epilepsy does not stop you from doing most things you want to do,
- anyone can get epilepsy,
- it is not a mental illness or something that happens only to disabled people.



You can help

What to do if someone has a seizure:

- Stay calm, don't be scared – call an adult and look at the time the seizure started
- Keep the person safe - move anything away that might hurt them
- Put something soft under the person's head
- Do not hold the person down
- Do not put anything in the person's mouth
- After a seizure, roll the person onto their side
- Stay with the person after the seizure stops and talk calmly to them.

3 most important things to remember

1. **Stay with the person**
2. **Keep them safe**
3. **Get an adult**



Dial 000 to call an ambulance if:

- You are not sure about what to do
- The person is injured or hurt
- The seizure happens in water
- The person cannot breathe properly
- They have more than one seizure
- The seizure lasts longer than five minutes.

It is probably the adult who will decide if you need to call an ambulance.

Quick Facts

- About 1 person in 150 have epilepsy
- Epilepsy is not always forever. Many children grow out of epilepsy
- You can't swallow your tongue during a seizure
- You can't catch epilepsy.



Extra information

[Epilepsy First Aid](#)

[Equip: An Epilepsy Resource for Youth](#) (you will need to register for access)

[Seizure Smart Schools](#)

Jumo Health: [Understanding Epilepsy Video](#) (animated)

Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800 <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

Animated Seizure First-Aid video for Children

