

Mental Health and Learning Disabilities



Epilepsy



What is Epilepsy?

A fit occurs when there is an abnormal activity in the brain.

When fits occur many times, it is called Epilepsy.

Fits can be of several different types.

What happens in a fit?

This depends on the type of fit.

A person having a fit may :

Pass out

Have jerks in hands, legs and other muscles in the body

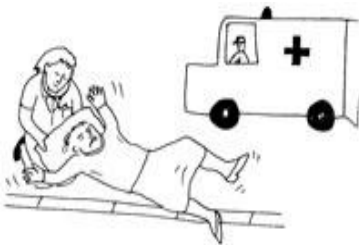
Pass water or open bowels

Have odd sensations such as odd smells, odd feelings

Behave strangely for a few minutes

Bite tongue

Not remember having a fit





What Causes Epilepsy?

- Some genetic disorders
- Infections of the brain
- Head injury
- Tumour in the brain
- Brain damage
- The cause may not be known in some people
- If you want to know more about it, you can speak to your Psychiatrist or Community Nurse.



How is epilepsy diagnosed?

You may be referred to a Neurologist. He is a doctor who is an expert in epilepsy.

You may need a scan of your brain.

An EEG can be done which records the activity in your brain.

You may need blood tests.



What is the Treatment?

- Medication called anti-epileptics are used to control fits.

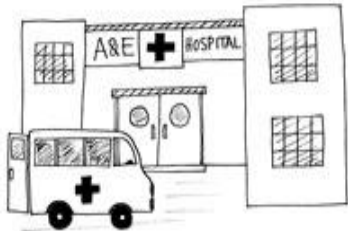
- Sometimes more than one anti-epileptic may be needed.

- If the fits last for long then rescue medication such as Diazepam can be used.

- You may need to the hospital.

- Brain surgery may also be an option in some people.

- A procedure called Vagal Nerve Stimulation can also be used.



What else can you do?

- Do not miss your tablets

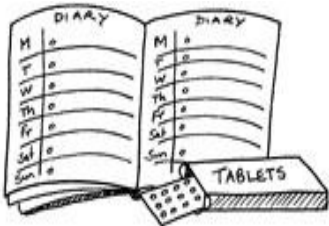
- Try and avoid being stressed

- Tell your doctor if you are taking other medications

- Get a good nights rest

- Maintain a seizure diary

- You could wear a badge/bracelet which will help people to know that you have epilepsy.



Epilepsy - Sudden unexplained death in people with epilepsy (SUDEP)

Sudden unexplained death can rarely happen in people who have Epilepsy.

It may happen if a person with epilepsy has:

A lot of major fits at night

Missed tablets

Had too much Alcohol

Younger age

Male gender

No one around when they have a major fit

Fits for many years



Risk of SUDEP can be reduced by:

Taking medication regularly

Monitoring of seizures at night e.g. having an epilepsy alarm

Avoiding alcohol

Eating healthy

Regular exercise

Getting a good night rest



Help and support



Your doctor:
Telephone Number:

Your Psychiatrist:
Telephone Number:

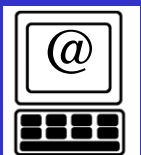


Your Community Nurse:
Telephone Number:

Other professionals involved:



Other resources:
www.patient.co.uk
www.epilepsyse.org.uk



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