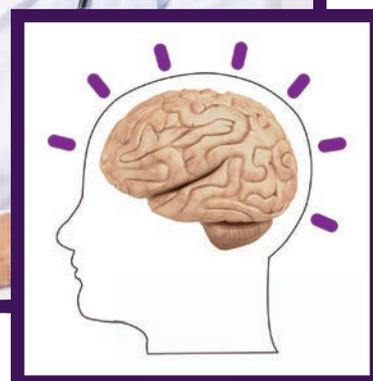




All about epilepsy

Booklet 1: About epilepsy



Supported by UCB

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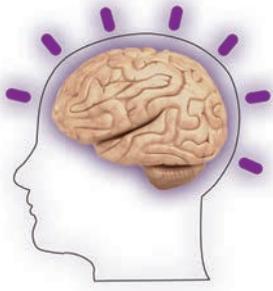
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About epilepsy



Epilepsy is a condition that happens in your brain. Some people call it an illness or a disability.



When you have epilepsy, you have **seizures**. We say this as **see-zhures**.



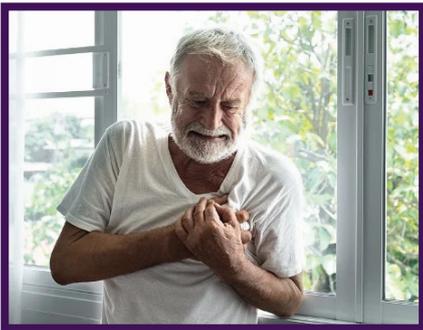
A **seizure** is when there is too much electricity in your brain. This stops your brain from working properly.



Some people call seizures **fits** or **funny turns**.



Some other medical problems can also cause seizures.



For example a problem with your heart.

These seizures are treated in a different way to epilepsy seizures.



Doctors treat the heart problem instead of the seizures.

About seizures



Not all seizures look the same. There are lots of different types of seizures.

A person who is having a seizure might:



- **black out.** This is like being in a deep sleep



- fall to the ground and start jerking and shaking their body



- suddenly feel scared



- not know where or who they are



- behave in a strange way



- have a weird feeling in their tummy



- chew their lips or play with their clothes



- suddenly stop talking and start staring. This looks like the person is dreaming



Most seizures don't last very long and will stop on their own.



Seizures can sometimes be scary to watch. This is because the person might:



- stop breathing for a few minutes



- start to look blue or pale in their face



- be sick



- wet themselves

How you might feel when a seizure happens

Before a seizure starts:

You might feel funny or scared.



Some people see a colour or have a strange feeling in their tummy.



This is called a **warning**. It can give you time to sit down before a seizure starts.

Not everyone has a warning.





When a seizure is happening:

You may not feel anything during a seizure.



You might not even know you are having a seizure.

When a seizure has finished:

You might feel lots of things after a seizure has happened. You might:



- feel sleepy or upset



- have achy muscles



- have a headache



- feel a bit sick



- be confused



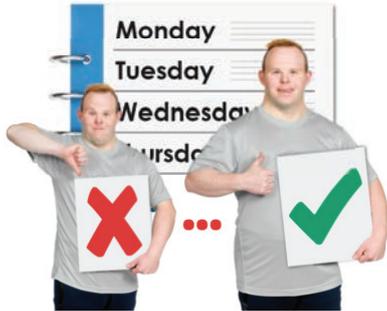
- not feel like talking



- want to go to sleep



When the seizure has finished, you might need to rest for 1 or 2 hours.



Some people need a few days before they feel OK again.



If you have badly hurt yourself, someone may need to phone an ambulance to take you to hospital.



Or you may need to go to see your doctor.

What can cause a seizure



Something that causes a seizure to start is called a **trigger**. Not everyone has a trigger for their seizures.



It is really important that you take your medicine every day.



If you forget to take it, you could have a seizure.

This is the biggest trigger for people with epilepsy.

Other triggers that can start a seizure include if you:



- feel stressed, angry or worried



- do not get enough sleep



- look at flashing lights



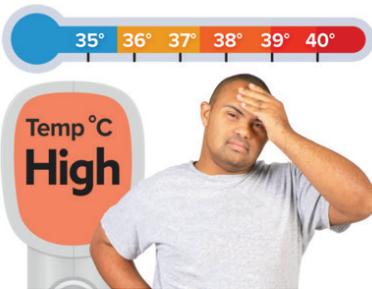
- drink too much alcohol



- do not drink enough water



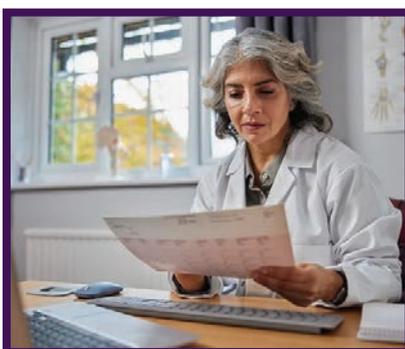
- have your **period**. A **period** is when you bleed from your vagina every month



- have an infection or a high temperature



- are in pain or feel unwell



Epilepsy specialist nurse

Your doctor or **epilepsy specialist nurse** can help you to manage your triggers.

An **epilepsy specialist nurse** is someone who has lots of training and supports people with epilepsy.

Going to hospital



When you have a seizure for the first time, you will need to go to hospital.



You will have some tests at the hospital. This is to find out if you have epilepsy or not.

Your doctor might do these tests:

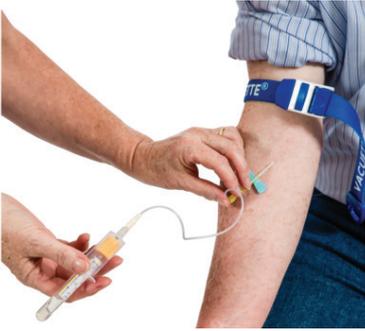


- A test to check your brain is working ok. This is called an **EEG**.



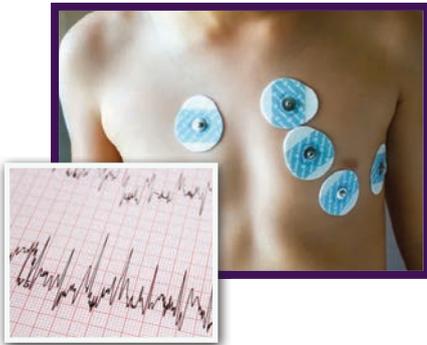
- A scan to see if there are any marks or scars on your brain. This is called an **MRI scan** or a **CT scan**.

The doctor may also do:



- A blood test. The doctor will use a needle and syringe to collect some of your blood.

This might sting a little bit but only for a short time.



- A test to make sure your heart works ok. This is called an **ECG**.



Some people find these tests a bit scary. There is no reason to be scared though.



The tests do not take long and should not hurt.



You might only need 1 or 2 of these tests.

Your doctor will decide which tests you need.



You can ask someone to come to hospital with you.

This could be a family member, or a support worker.

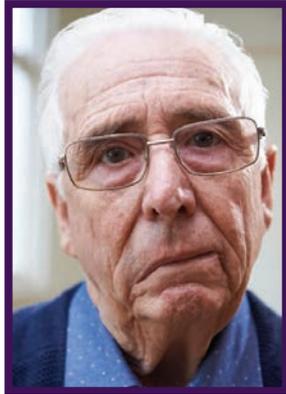


This person can ask questions for you.

They can also help you remember what the doctor said to you.

Why you have got epilepsy

There are lots of reasons why people have epilepsy:



- some people have another health problem which can cause epilepsy.

For example, if they have had a stroke



- some people get epilepsy because they have badly hurt their head in an accident



- some people have epilepsy because someone else in their family has it



- people with a learning disability are more likely to have epilepsy



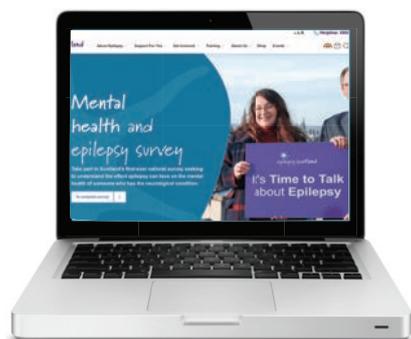
- sometimes, doctors do not know why a person has epilepsy.

This happens quite often.



You cannot catch epilepsy from someone else.

More information about epilepsy



We have lots of information about epilepsy on our website:

www.epilepsyscotland.org.uk



We also have more easy read leaflets about epilepsy. We can send you copies of the leaflets in the post.



You can phone us to ask for a leaflet on:

0808 800 2200



Or email us at:

contact@epilepsyscotland.org.uk