

Patient information from BMJ

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Epilepsy: questions to ask your doctor

If you (or your child) have been diagnosed with epilepsy you may want to talk to your doctor to find out more about the condition.

Here are some questions that you might want to ask.

General questions about epilepsy

- Why am I having seizures?
- What causes epilepsy?
- What sort of seizures do I have?
- Will I always have this sort of seizure or might they change?
- Which part of the brain are the seizures affecting?
- How likely is it that I will have another seizure?
- Will I know if a seizure is going to happen? What are the warning signs?
- What do my family members need to know about what to do if I have a seizure?

Questions about treatment

- How many seizures do I need to have before treatment is necessary?
- How might drug treatment help?
- What are the chances that I will stop having seizures after taking medicines?
- What are the drugs called? Which is the best one for me?
- What are the side effects of treatment?
- Are there things I can do to reduce the risk of side effects?
- What should I do if I forget a dose?
- If the seizures stop, can I stop taking the drugs?
- What will happen if my epilepsy isn't treated?
- Is surgery an option? What are the pros and cons?
- Will epilepsy affect other aspects of my health?

Epilepsy: questions to ask your doctor

If you're a woman and thinking of having a baby

- Is it safe for me to get pregnant?
- Can I carry on taking drug treatment when I'm pregnant?
- Will the treatment harm my baby?
- Are there things I shouldn't do during my pregnancy?
- Do I need to take any extra safety precautions when my baby is born?
- If I have seizures while pregnant will it harm my baby?
- What vitamins should I take?

If your child has epilepsy

- Does my child need to take any extra safety measures?
- Does my child need to go to a special school?
- Should my child wear a helmet?
- What should I tell his or her teachers?
- Can my child join in all the normal activities in school?
- Can my child go swimming?
- Besides taking medicines, is there anything else we can do to prevent seizures?

If you're an adult with epilepsy

- Are there things I cannot do because of my epilepsy, such as swimming?
- Can I still drive?
- Are there any changes I should make to my life to help prevent seizures?
- Are there any jobs I shouldn't do?

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