

PATIENT EDUCATION/SELF MANAGEMENT

SEIZURE DISORDER: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

**What is a Seizure?**

- A seizure happens when nerve signals in the brain are not working right.

What causes seizures?

A seizure can happen for many reasons. You may have a seizure if you:

- Hurt your head
- Had a brain injury at birth
- Have a brain infection or a tumor
- Have a stroke
- Have been abusing drugs
- Suddenly stop using a substance you are addicted to, like alcohol or drugs
- Your blood sugar is too low

**How are seizures treated?**

- The right treatment for seizures depends on what causes them
- Treatment for seizures is different for each person
- If you have more than one seizure you may need anti-seizure medicines
- You may need to try different medicines before health care staff finds a treatment that works well
- Your primary care provider may need to make many changes to your medication to control your seizures

Can people die from having a seizure disorder?

Most people who have seizures live a full life span. However, there are some things about living with seizure disorder that can increase the risk of early death which include:

- Accidents such as drowning, burning, choking, or falling during a seizure
- People with a seizure disorder may have more risk for depression and suicide
- Very long seizures or many seizures that happen one after another (called status epilepticus), can be life-threatening
- Very rarely, people with a seizure disorder may die suddenly, without explanation

Good seizure control and use of safety measures can reduce the risk of seizure related death

How Can I Take Care of Myself?

- ✓ Take your prescribed medication regularly, the way your primary care provider ordered
- ✓ Do not start taking any other medications, including over-the-counter and herbal supplements, without checking with your primary care provider first
- ✓ Keep a record of seizures as they occur
- ✓ Stay away from alcohol, illegal drugs, and medications not prescribed for you
- ✓ Avoid activities that have a risk of head injuries, such as climbing ladders or contact sports
- ✓ Stay away from jobs that could put you in danger
- ✓ See your primary care provider regularly as scheduled

**At your housing area, work or school:**

- ✓ Tell your "cellie", friends, boss, or teacher(s) at school that you may have a seizure
- ✓ Let them know what to do if one happens

What Other People Should do if You Have a Seizure

- Help you lie down on a bed or the floor
- Loosen the clothes around your neck and take off eyeglasses
- Check to make sure you are breathing
- Turn you on your side if you start to throw up
- Move you only if needed to keep you from getting hurt (for example, by hitting furniture)

People who are helping you should NOT:

- Try to hold you down
- Put anything in your mouth while you are having a seizure

For Women: What if I am pregnant?

- Some anti-seizure medicines can affect the health of your baby. You should tell your primary care provider right away if you are pregnant
- Anti-seizure medicine can lessen the effects of some birth control methods
- If you are of child-bearing age, you should talk to your primary care provider about your plans for pregnancy

