

I am not
afraid
EPILEPSY



I know my epilepsy

Things to know about Epilepsy

✓ What is Epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a brain disease where nerve cells don't signal properly, which causes seizures. Seizures are uncontrolled bursts of electrical activities that change sensations, behaviors, awareness and muscle movements.

✓ How common is Epilepsy?

Around 50 million people worldwide have epilepsy, making it one of the most common neurological diseases globally. The overall epilepsy prevalence in India is 5.59-10 per 1000. Over one crore patients who have epilepsy are in India, representing more than about 1% of our population.

Epilepsy and seizures can develop in any person at any age. Seizures and epilepsy are more common in young children and older people.

✓ What are the main causes of Epilepsy?

Most common causes for Epilepsy are...

In children - lack of oxygen during birth, bleeding in the brain, maternal drug use or changes in the structure of the brain.

In adults – Genetic factors, Brain Tumor, Head trauma, Brain infections, Stroke or brain haemorrhage, alcohol or drug use.

✓ Can Epilepsy be cured?

No there is no cure for epilepsy, but there are many treatment options that can help manage seizures. About 6 out of 10 people diagnosed with epilepsy can become seizure free within a few years with proper treatment.

✓ Can someone with Epilepsy live a normal life?

With the right therapy, and by knowing what to do in the event of a seizure, most people with epilepsy go on to lead full, healthy lives.

Things to know about Epilepsy treatment

✓ Epilepsy can be treated with a variety of methods including Medication, Surgery, Seizure devices or Diet.

Medication: The medicines prescribed by your doctor to control your seizures are called antiepileptic drugs. Around 2 in every 3 people with epilepsy will be able to manage their seizures with medicines. If one medicine doesn't work for you, your doctor may add another one or change medicines, until they find the best one for you.

Surgery: Sometimes surgery can remove a small piece of brain tissue in the area that the seizures start from. This may be an option if your seizures don't get better with other treatments.

Vagus nerve stimulation (Seizure devices): Vagus nerve stimulation involves putting a small device in to the chest wall. The device sends out electrical signals to the brain through the vagus nerve. This can reduce the number and severity of seizures. Your doctor might recommend this if your seizures don't respond to medicines and can't be treated with surgery.

Ketogenic Diet: Ketogenic diet is one treatment option for children or adults with epilepsy whose seizures are not controlled with medications. The ketogenic diet is a high fat, low carbohydrate, controlled protein diet. This diet is a medical treatment and is usually only considered when at least two suitable medications have been tried and not worked.

✓ Can epileptic seizures be prevented?

Yes, the best way to prevent seizure is by following your doctor's advice and taking your medicines as prescribed. Don't skip doses or stop taking your medicine without first checking with your doctor.

Things to know about Epileptic seizure first aid

✓ You are with someone having a tonic-clonic seizure (where the body stiffens, followed by general muscle jerking), try to:

- ▶ Stay calm and remain with the person.
- ▶ Keep them safe and protect them from injury.
- ▶ Place something soft under their head and loosen any tight clothing.
- ▶ After the seizure is over, roll them on their side (if they have food or fluid in their mouth, roll them onto their side immediately).
- ▶ Reassure the person until they recover.
- ▶ Time the seizure, if you can.
- ▶ Do not put anything into their mouth or restrain or move the person, unless they are in danger.

✓ If a person has a seizure when he is in a wheelchair or car seat:

- ▶ Leave the person seated with the seatbelt on (unless it is causing injury).
- ▶ Put the wheelchair brakes on.
- ▶ If it's a tilt wheelchair, tilt the seat and lock in position.
- ▶ Support their head until the seizure has ended.
- ▶ Lean the person slightly to one side to aid drainage of any fluid in the mouth.

✓ If a seizures occurs in water:

- ▶ Support the person's head so their face is out of the water.
- ▶ Tilt their head back to ensure a clear airway.
- ▶ If the person is in a pool, remove them from the water when the jerking stops. In the rare circumstance the jerking does not stop, seek help from others and remove the person from the water.
- ▶ If the person is in the surf, remove them from the water immediately.
- ▶ Once out of the water, call for an ambulance immediately. (Do this even if the person is breathing, as they may have inhaled water)
- ▶ If they are not breathing, or not breathing normally, reposition the person onto their back and begin the appropriate form of CPR

This is for informational purposes only. For medical advice or diagnosis, consult your doctor.

Lifestyle modification considerations for Epilepsy

Below lifestyle changes can help manage epilepsy.

✓ Sleep

Getting enough sleep (7–8 hours a night) can help improve brain health and reduce the risk of seizures.

✓ Diet

Eating a healthy diet of whole, natural foods can help. Whole foods are minimally processed and have the highest concentration of nutrients.

✓ Exercise

Regular exercise can help improve seizure control and cognitive function. However, you should consult with a clinical consultant before starting a new exercise routine.

✓ Avoid triggers

Avoid known seizure triggers, such as flashing lights, drugs, and alcohol. Even one or two drinks can trigger seizures.

✓ Stress management

Reducing emotional stress can help lower the risk of developing epilepsy.

✓ Medications

Take medications as prescribed and establish a medication plan to avoid missing doses.

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