

Patient information from BMJ

Last published: Jan 17, 2022

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 type of seizures do I have?
- Will I always have this type of seizures 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 drugs?
- 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 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 about having a baby

- Is it safe for me to get pregnant?
- Can I keep taking drug treatment for epilepsy 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 medications, 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?

The patient information from *BMJ Best Practice* is regularly updated. The most recent version of Best Practice can be found at bestpractice.bmj.com. This information is intended for use by health professionals. It is not a substitute for medical advice. It is strongly recommended that you independently verify any interpretation of this material and, if you have a medical problem, see your doctor.

Please see BMJ's full terms of use at: bmj.com/company/legal-information. BMJ does not make any representations, conditions, warranties or guarantees, whether express or implied, that this material is accurate, complete, up-to-date or fit for any particular purposes.

© BMJ Publishing Group Ltd 2024. All rights reserved.

What did you think about this patient information guide?



Epilepsy: questions to ask your doctor

Complete the [online survey](#) or scan the QR code to help us to ensure our content is of the highest quality and relevant for patients. The survey is anonymous and will take around 5 minutes to complete.

