

Tracking Health Issues

You can take control of your health with a few essential skills.

Know your seizures

There are many different types of seizures and each person's seizures can look different. Some seizures make people black out, fall down, and shake. Other seizures make people stare and stop talking. Knowing what you do during your seizures is important. This can help your family and friends know what to look out for and can help your doctor know how to treat you.

There are two main types of seizures: focal and generalized.

- A focal seizure is one that starts in a small area in the brain. Focal seizures may or may not cause you to blackout or lose awareness. Sometimes focal seizures can turn into seizures that can cause you to collapse or have convulsions, also known as a tonic-clonic seizure.
- A generalized seizure affects the entire brain at once and often causes a loss of awareness. Generalized seizures might look like just staring, or cause muscle jerks, or cause you to collapse and have convulsions.

Questions to ask yourself:

- Do I have some type of warning that a seizure is starting?
Do I stare? Stop talking? Feel nauseated? Smell something funny?
Move my arms or legs? Have a weird feeling in part of my body? Fall down? Black out?
- Do I know if I have had a seizure?

- Has my doctor told me if I have focal seizures, generalized seizures, or both types?

Know why you have epilepsy

Seizures are caused by abnormal electricity in the brain. While many people do not know where their seizures come from, some people can explain why they happen.

Questions to ask yourself:

- Do I have seizures that come from one part of my brain?
- Do I have family members with seizures?
- Do I have an illness or injury that caused my seizures?
- Has my doctor explained to me why I have epilepsy?

Keep track of your seizures

Keeping track of when you have seizures is important so that your doctor knows if your seizure treatment is working or if it needs to be changed. You can keep track of your seizures by using a calendar, notebook, or a seizure diary app on your phone. Some people like to wear a watch to detect and track their seizures, however, these do not work well to detect all seizures.

Questions to ask yourself:

- How do I track my seizures?

Know your seizure action plan

It is good to have a plan for what others should do when you have a seizure. When a person has a seizure, they should be carefully moved away from anything harmful such as a sharp object, a lit stove, or the hard floor. If the person is not awake, they should be turned on their side. Most seizures stop on their own after 1-2 minutes and nothing more needs to be done. However, some

people require rescue medicine to stop their seizures. If the seizure lasts longer than usual or if the person does not come back to their normal self afterward, then it is necessary to call 911 for help.

Questions to ask yourself:

- What is my seizure action plan? (Ask your doctor about it, or go here to find a template: <https://www.epilepsy.com/living-epilepsy/toolbox/seizure-forms>)
- Who should I share my seizure action plan with?

Take charge of your medical history and appointments

While other people may know your medical history, it is important that you can share your medical history as well. This includes:

- Knowing how old you were when your seizures started
- What medications you have already tried for seizures
- What other health problems you have
- What medications you are currently taking.

You also need to keep track of your doctor appointments and think about what questions you will have for your doctor when you next see him or her

Questions to ask yourself:

- What medications do I take?
- What medications am I allergic to?
- When is my next appointment?
- What questions do I have for my doctor?

Keep track of your mental health

Decreasing stress improves your seizure control and helps your mood and makes you feel more in control. When your mental health is good you are more

likely to take care of yourself, feel less overwhelmed, and stay on top of everyday activities and needs. Stress, depression, and anxiety can all take a toll on your thinking and memory. This may lead to forgetting to take medications, which help to control your seizures.

Questions to ask yourself:

- Whom do I contact if I feel stressed, depressed, or anxious?

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