

# Do you want to know?

## Epilepsy

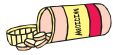
H02  
sheet 1/1

### What is it?

Epilepsy is a physical condition that occurs when there is an electric disturbance in the nerve cells of the brain. When the nerve cells are not working properly, a person's consciousness, movements, or actions may be altered for a short time.

### What do you need to know?

#### Drugs



- Take medications regularly as prescribed by your physician, even if there is no seizure activity (jerky movements). Never discontinue treatment without the physician's advice.
- Report adverse reactions from medications such as drowsiness, lethargy, unsteady gait, hyperactivity, confusion, disturbed sleep, visual disturbances, skin rashes and/or sore throat.

#### Diet



- Follow a healthy diet; usually there are no dietary restrictions unless otherwise prescribed by your physician for a certain health problem.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages and limit caffeine; they trigger seizures.

#### Activity



- Be moderate in exercise and activity; excessive exercising precipitates seizures.
- Sleep and rest adequately as much as your body needs; sleep deprivation stimulates seizure.
- Engage in normal activities taking precautions (for example swim with a friend who knows what to do if a seizure occurs).



#### Therapeutic Measures

- Keep a diary of the frequency and length of attacks and show it to the physician.
- Avoid flashing lights such as flickering of a computer as in computer games or television.
- Take showers and avoid tub baths in order to prevent drowning.
- Seek counseling if you are not feeling comfortable with the new lifestyle changes.



#### Considerations

- Alert your family members that during an attack, you should be protected from injury without being severely restrained and should be put on your side if possible. Seek medical help if the attack lasted for more than five minutes.
- Recognize warning symptoms (called aura phase) and triggering factors and try to act accordingly to avoid problems.
- Be aware of factors that might precipitate seizures such as high temperature, increase in respiration, decrease in blood sugar level, stress and menstruation.
- Do not drive until you are free of seizure attacks for 1 year and as advised by your physician.
- Consider safety measures at home (secure safe access to stairways and exits and eliminate obstacles to moving around; move furniture out of the way).

#### Follow up

- Follow up with your physician regularly and do regular blood tests.

### INSTRUCTIONS

---

---

---

The content of this educational leaflet is of general information. Ask your physician or health care provider if this content applies to you.

Prepared by the Nursing Services in coordination with other health care disciplines.