

Healthy Habits

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Tips for reaching and maintaining your optimum state of health

How much do you know about Epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. When a person has two or more seizures, they are considered to have epilepsy.

A seizure happens when a brief, strong surge of electrical activity affects part or all of the brain. One in 10 adults will have a seizure sometime during their life. Seizures can last from a few seconds to a few minutes. They can have many symptoms, from convulsions and loss of consciousness to blank staring, lip smacking, or jerking movements of arms and legs.

What Epilepsy is Not

If you have epilepsy, you probably already know that it is not a mental disorder. It can be caused by anything that affects the brain, including tumors and strokes. In some cases, epilepsy can even be inherited. Often, no cause can be found. Epilepsy is generally not the kind of condition that gets worse with time. Most adults who have it can expect a relatively normal life span and lifestyle although adjustments may be necessary. Whether you are living with epilepsy or not, the more you know, the better equipped you will be to interact with others and the world around you.

The Affected Population

Epilepsy affects people of all ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds. More than 3 million people in the U.S. have some form of epilepsy. About 200,000 new cases of seizure disorders and epilepsy are diagnosed each year. Epilepsy can develop at any time of life, especially in early childhood and old age but the fact remains...epilepsy can strike anyone.



There are still many unanswered questions about epilepsy. The key to a better life for millions depends on research and support.

Ongoing Research

If you believe you may have epilepsy or you have already been diagnosed, you should be in close contact with your healthcare provider. The more you learn about the condition, the better prepared you will be to deal with it. Information such as definitions, frequently asked questions and seizures first aid can be found at The Epilepsy Foundation website, www.epilepsyfoundation.org.

Most importantly, research must continue to answer questions such as why seizures begin, why trauma produces seizures years after the event, how genetic factors influence seizures, how epilepsy affects women's reproductive health, and what factors make brain cells susceptible to seizures. We must discover ways to develop better treatment, better understanding of causes, and new ways to prevent seizures of all kinds.

As individuals, we must work together to eliminate misunderstanding and help people with epilepsy and their loved ones cope with its challenges. There are more than 3 million reasons why.

The material contained in Healthy Habits is not intended to be medical advice on any particular matter. Readers should seek appropriate professional advice before acting on the basis of any information contained in this publication. This information is provided courtesy of Optima Health.