

**EPILEPSY**

Epilepsy is a disorder of brain function characterized by sudden seizures, brief attacks of inappropriate behavior, and change in one's state of consciousness or bizarre movements. Seizures (also called fits or convulsions) are a symptom, not a disease. Epilepsy is not contagious. It can affect both sexes and all ages.

There are many causes of epilepsy. Common causes include: Brain damage at or before birth; drug or alcohol use; chemical poisoning; head injury; brain infections; brain tumors; strokes; and low blood sugar. Several forms of epileptic seizures exist. Petit mal, (absence), seizures affect mostly children. The person stops activity and stares blankly around for a minute or two, unaware of what is happening. Grand mall seizures can affect all ages. They are characterized by loss of consciousness, stiffness and spasm of muscle groups, followed by uncontrollable jerking. The patient often loses bowel and bladder control and is unaware of their surroundings. The seizures can last from several minutes to hours, and are often followed by deep sleep or mental confusion. Prior to the seizure, the person may have warning signals: a tense feeling; visual disturbances; smelling a bad odor; or hearing strange noises. Focal epilepsy, in which a small part of the body begins twitching uncontrollably, can occur without the loss of consciousness. However, the twitching may spread until it involves the whole body. Finally, in Temporal-lobe epilepsy, the person may suddenly behave out of character or inappropriately, such as becoming violent or angry; laughing for no reason; or making agitated or bizarre body movements, including odd chewing movements. Diagnostic measures may include CT scan, EEG, MRI, PETS, and various laboratory studies.

Your doctor or neurologist will determine treatment for epilepsy. You should wear a medical alert type bracelet or pendant that shows your medical diagnosis. Avoid any circumstance that has triggered a seizure in the past. In the event that you are witnessing a seizure, loosen clothing, lay the person flat or with the head turned to the side, maintain an airway, and protect them from injuring themselves. Although frightening to see, seizures are rarely harmful in themselves. If possible, insert a tongue depressor or spoon or rolled up clothe in the mouth to prevent them from biting their tongues. **DO NOT PUT YOUR FINGERS IN THEIR MOUTHS.**

We at the Health Center will be happy to help you.



**Healthfully yours,**

**Dr. Healthberry**

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For questions or comments you can;

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