

# World Epilepsy Day



## International Epilepsy Day

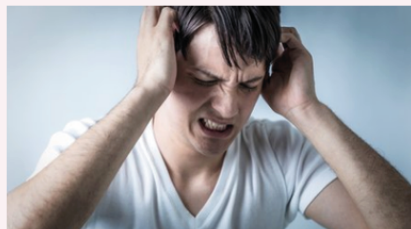
#EPILEPSYDAY 14 February

Each year, on the second Monday of February, more than 120 countries celebrate International Epilepsy Day to raise awareness of epilepsy and highlight the problems faced by people living with epilepsy, their families, and their carers.

### What is Epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a disorder of the brain characterised by **repeated seizures**. A seizure is usually defined as a sudden alteration of behaviour due to a temporary change in the electrical functioning of the brain.

In epilepsy the brain's electrical rhythms tend to become imbalanced, resulting in recurrent seizures. In patients with seizures, the normal electrical pattern is disrupted by sudden and synchronized bursts of electrical energy that may briefly affect their consciousness, movements or sensations.



### Worldwide Facts and Figures



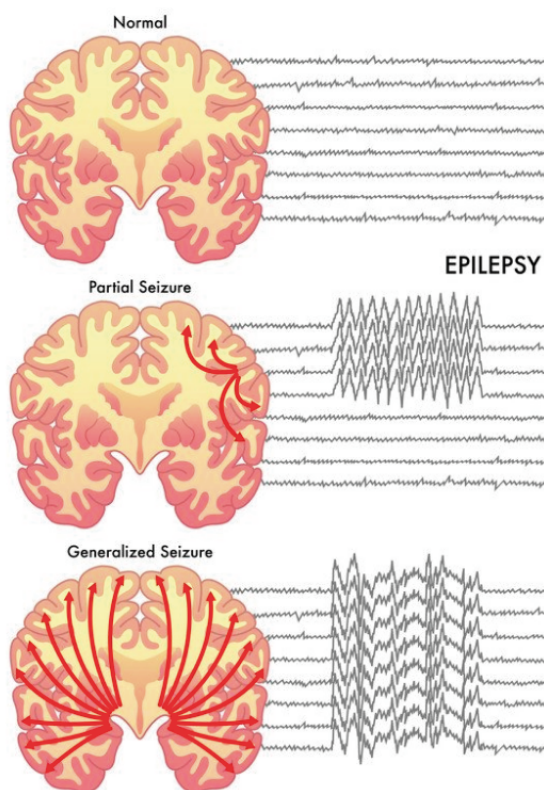
Based on the WHO's statistics, the following results were revealed:

- Epilepsy is a chronic, non-communicable disease of the brain that affects people of all ages.
- Around 50 million people worldwide have epilepsy, making it one of the most common neurological diseases globally.
- Nearly 80% of people with epilepsy live in low and middle-income countries.
- It is estimated that up to 70% of people living with epilepsy could live seizure-free if properly diagnosed and treated.
- The risk of premature death in people with epilepsy is three times higher than in the general population.
- Three-quarters of people with epilepsy living in low-income countries do not get the treatment they need.

### Types of Epilepsy and Symptoms

Epilepsy comes in a variety of forms. Each category contains various forms of seizures, each with its own set of symptoms and onset (beginning in different parts of the brain).

Treatment is guided by determining the type of seizure and where it occurs in the brain because drugs used to treat one type can potentially worsen another. Epilepsy types include:



**Focal (partial) seizures** don't cause loss of consciousness. Symptoms include:

- Alterations to the sense of taste, smell, sight, hearing, or touch
- Dizziness
- Tangling and twitching of limbs

**Complex partial seizures** involve loss of awareness or consciousness. Other symptoms include:

- Staring blankly
- Unresponsiveness
- Performing repetitive movements

**Generalized seizures** involve the whole brain. There are six types:

- **Absence seizures**, which used to be called "petit mal seizures" causes a blank stare. This type of seizure may also cause repetitive movements like lip smacking or blinking. There's also usually a short loss of awareness.
- **Tonic seizures** cause muscle stiffness.
- Atonic seizures lead to loss of muscle control and can make the individual fall suddenly.
- **Clonic seizures** are characterized by repeated, jerky muscle movements of the face, neck and arms.
- **Myoclonic seizures** cause spontaneous quick twitching of arms and legs.
- **Tonic-clonic seizures** used to be called "grand mal seizures." Symptoms include:
  - Stiffening of the body
  - Shaking
  - Loss of bladder or bowel control
  - Biting of the tongue
  - Loss of consciousness

### First aid for any type of seizure

As recommended by the CDC, the following are some general guidelines on how to help someone having any type of seizure:

- Check to see if the person is wearing a medical bracelet or other emergency information.
- Keep yourself and other people calm.
- Ease the person to the floor.
- Turn the person gently onto one side. This will help the person breathe.
- Clear the area around the person of anything hard or sharp. This can prevent injury.
- Put something soft and flat, like a folded jacket, under his or her head.
- Remove eyeglasses.
- Loosen ties or anything around the neck that may make it hard to breathe.



### Stop! Do NOT...



Knowing what **NOT** to do is important for keeping a person safe during or after a seizure.

Never do any of the following:

- Do **not** hold the individual down or try to stop his or her movements.
- Do **not** put anything in the individual's mouth. This can injure teeth or the jaw. A person having a seizure cannot swallow his or her tongue.
- Do **not** try to give mouth-to-mouth breaths (like CPR). People usually start breathing again on their own after a seizure.
- Do **not** offer the person water or food until he or she is fully alert.

### Do I call the emergency?



Seizures do not usually require medical intervention. But if any of the following applies, the emergency services should be contacted:

- A person who has never had a seizure.
- The individual has trouble breathing or waking up after a seizure.
- A seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes.
- A second seizure occurs soon after the first.
- The person is hurt during the seizure.
- A seizure occurs in water.
- The person has a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease or is pregnant.

### You can take the following steps to reduce the risk of seizure-related injury.

- Get the best seizure control possible.
- Take your medication as prescribed.
- Speak to your doctor if you're not happy with your current medication or side effects.
- Have regular reviews with your doctor.
- Be involved in self-management.
- Avoid any known seizure triggers for you.
- Know when your seizures are most likely to occur.
- Get enough sleep.
- Be healthy.
- Manage stress.
- Make sure those close to you know what to do in case of a seizure.

**Treatment can help most people with epilepsy have fewer seizures or stop having seizures completely. It includes:**

- Medicines called anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs)
- Surgery to remove a small part of the brain that's causing seizures
- A procedure to put a small electrical device inside the body that can help control seizures
- A special diet (ketogenic diet) that can help control seizures



**Some people need treatment for life.**

**But they might be able to stop if seizures disappear over time.**