



Epilepsy is a disorder in which nerve cell activity in the brain is disturbed, causing seizures.



What I Should Know about Seizures & Epilepsy

What are seizures?

- Seizures are caused by unusual electrical activity in the brain. This activity can cause many of the different symptoms seen in seizures.
- There are many different types of seizures. They are given names based on where they take place in the brain, and what kinds of symptoms they cause.
- Seizures can look very different. Some can cause people to be confused or stare off into space. Others can cause people to pass out and fall. Some cause people's muscles to become stiff and jerk. Some cause people to go completely limp.

What is epilepsy?

- People are diagnosed with epilepsy after having two or more seizures that happen more than 24 hours apart. The seizures are not caused by other medical problems.
- Epilepsy has many different causes, like:
 - » Genetic causes
 - » Head and brain injuries
 - » Changes in levels of nutrients in your body



Who gets epilepsy?

- Anyone can have epilepsy. In the USA, about 2% of adults and 1% of children have epilepsy.
- Epilepsy is much more common in people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including people with autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Some people are born with epilepsy, but others can develop it as a child, as an adult, or when they get older.

What if I think I have had a seizure? What next?

- If you think you may have had a seizure it is important to tell your doctor.
- Describe the seizure to your doctor. This will help your doctor know what kind of seizure you had.
- Share with your doctor other people's descriptions of what they witnessed.

