What can YOU do?
Treating Epilepsy and Seizures

Further information on all the aspects of epilepsy discussed in this pamphlet, and its treatment, may be found at NoMoreSeizures.org.

Epilepsy Foundation is Your Ally

Sometimes it may seem like you are the only person who has seizures, but in fact more than three million Americans have epilepsy. The Epilepsy Foundation is an organization solely dedicated to helping you achieve the goal of no seizures and no side-effects.

When you visit NoMoreSeizures.org you can reach the Epilepsy Foundation. There you will find medically accurate information and many programs to help you with how epilepsy can impact your life, from driving and employment to education. You will also be able to reach a caring community of thousands of other people with epilepsy.

Sometimes the greatest help of all is just talking to a friend who is experiencing the same thing you are.

Hard to Control Seizures

Unfortunately not everyone will reach the goal of no seizures and no side-effects. If you have tried more than two different epilepsy medications and are still having seizures, you should talk with your doctor about other treatment options. Some people are able to have a relatively safe operation that often stops the seizures; other people have benefited from a pacemaker-like device called VNS.

Your primary care doctor or general neurologist may suggest you see a doctor who specializes just in epilepsy called an "epileptologist" or go to a medical center designed just to help people with epilepsy. You can find a list of these at NoMoreSeizures.org.

Epilepsy, it is more than seizures

Everyone feels blue or anxious sometimes; it is just part of living. However, many people with epilepsy find that they are sad for long periods of time and have trouble enjoying life. It can be more than just the daily challenge of living with epilepsy, it could be a serious medical condition called depression.

Today, scientists suspect epilepsy and depression may have a common underlying cause. So talking with your doctor about depression doesn’t mean you are mentally unstable and it isn’t something to be ashamed about – it is a medical condition. Depression can generally be successfully treated, but only if you share these feelings with your doctor. At NoMoreSeizures.org there are helpful tips on how to talk with your doctor about depression.

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Did You Know?

There are new medicines to prevent seizures and more are on the way. There are different kinds of seizures. Some medicines are better than others for certain seizure types. Ask your doctor what type of seizures you have and which treatment is best for you.

Problems such as not remembering things, being tired all the time, sudden weight gain or loss, hair loss or a rash could be side-effects from your medication. It is not always easy to balance drug side effects and control of seizures, but it is important to discuss this with your doctor.

Not all epilepsy drugs work the same. Different formulations of the same pills may work differently in your body. Know what your pills look like and don’t accept a change at the pharmacy without first talking to your doctor.

The best treatment comes from a partnership between you and your doctor.

The goal is no seizures and no side-effects. Your best chance to achieve this goal is for you, your family, your doctor and everyone on the health care team to work together as partners.

To find the treatment that is right for you, your doctor needs to know about your seizures and the impact of your seizures on your life style.

Being a partner in your health care means asking questions and finding out as much as possible about epilepsy, how it affects you (or your child), and about the treatment your doctor has prescribed for you. Sometimes it’s hard to ask the right questions, to make your feelings known, and to understand the answers completely. And that’s what this pamphlet – and the website, NoMoreSeizures.org – is all about.

Your Medication: What’s New?

Epilepsy medicines are designed to prevent seizures. There are more than 20 medications available currently – some developed as many as 60 to 70 years ago, and others developed much more recently.

In general, most experts believe newer medicines are better for your quality of life because they have fewer or less severe side-effects.

Each type of epilepsy (and there are several) can be matched with a group of medicines most likely to be effective. If one type of medication does not work, or has unpleasant side effects, there are others that can be tried.

If you are taking epilepsy medication and still having any seizures, or if you feel your medication is hurting your quality of life, ask your doctor if there are other medications that may work better for you.

Check out the Epilepsy Foundation’s website

NoMoreSeizures.org

for more information on all epilepsy treatments, or call 1-800-332-1000

Know Your Medication and How it Works

Not too long ago, there was little that could be done to help someone with epilepsy stop their seizures. Patients were often put in an institution. Today, thanks to research, most people with epilepsy can control seizures and enjoy all life has to offer. To achieve this requires the right medication and that you always follow your doctor’s instructions.

Making changes to your treatment without talking to your doctor usually spells disaster. Some people if they haven’t had a seizure for a long time feel they are cured and stop taking the drug that is helping prevent the seizures. Other people experience bad side-effects so they take less of their drug or take it less often.

Most people with epilepsy will need to take medication throughout their life. Even if you think you no longer need to take your medication or if you are having problems with side-effects never make a change without talking to your doctor.

Like all health care today, epilepsy medications can be very expensive. There are generic versions which may cost less and you should ask your doctor if there is a lower cost generic that is right for you. In some cases your doctor will want you to stay on the same brand medication or only take the generic from the same manufacturer to avoid the risk of break-through seizures or increased side-effects, which is why it is important to talk to your doctor before you make any change.

Whether you are taking the brand medication or a generic version, you need to know about your medication. Recognize what your pill looks like and if you get a prescription that looks different, talk to your doctor right away.