

November is National Epilepsy Awareness Month

What is epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a common condition that causes repeated seizures. The seizures are caused by bursts of electrical activity in the brain that are not normal. Seizures may cause problems with muscle control, movement, speech, vision, or awareness. They usually don't last very long, but they can be scary. Epilepsy is not a type of mental illness or intellectual disability. It generally does not affect how well you think or learn.

What are the symptoms?

The main symptom of epilepsy is repeated seizures that happen without warning. Without treatment, seizures may continue and become worse and more frequent over time. There are different kinds of seizures. You may have only one type of seizure. Some people have more than one type. Depending on what kind of seizure you have:

- Your senses may not work right. For example, you may notice strange smells or sounds.
- You may lose control of your muscles.
- You may fall down, and your body may twitch or jerk.
- You may stare off into space.
- You may faint (lose consciousness).

Not everyone who has seizures has epilepsy. Sometimes seizures happen because of an injury, illness, or another problem. In these cases, the seizures stop when that problem improves or goes away.

There is good news...

The good news is that treatment usually works to control and reduce seizures. Medicine controls seizures in many people who have epilepsy. It may take time and careful, controlled changes by you and your doctor to find the right combination, schedule, and dosing of medicine to best manage your epilepsy.

Additional Resources

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Kaiser Permanente](#) members
- [Cigna](#) members