

# Epilepsy Information for Families with School Aged Children

## An introduction

Epilepsy is a condition that affects around 1 in every 200 children and young people under the age of 18 years. It is a condition that affects the brain and results in a temporary disruption to the way the brain normally functions. When this disruption occurs it causes the brain's messages to become mixed up and this then result in Epileptic seizures. Depending on the area of the brain affected by the temporary disruption will depend on the type of seizures your child may experience.

## Duration of Seizures:

Seizures usually last between a few seconds to a few minutes and can affect children in different ways. Some children experience loss of consciousness during a seizure, whilst others have described strange sensations, or twitching or jerking movements of parts of their body.

## Causes of Epilepsy:

Sometimes epilepsy can be as a results of damage to the brain, following a traumatic birth or head injury. Sometimes it could be caused by infection, such as meningitis. For around six in every 10 people diagnosed with epilepsy the cause is unknown.

## Diagnosis:

Following a suspected epileptic seizure a consultant will take a very detailed history of your child from you. They may also request that your child have an EEG or MRI to support diagnosis. Often a diagnosis of epilepsy is made after a child has had two witnessed seizures.

## Medication:

Anti-epileptic medication is usually started following the diagnosis of epilepsy. Your consultant will provide a plan on how to take this, the dose required and any side effects that you should observe for.

**Never make any changes or stop administering your child's medication without first discussing it with your child's epilepsy team.**

## Supporting your child:

Your child may be upset or worried, or you may find their behaviour challenging for a while following their diagnosis. It is important to listen to their concerns and reassure them where possible, your named consultant or specialist nurse can sign post you to age appropriate support and advice if required.

It is also important to remember that children who experience seizures can be tired and emotional at times, early bed times and clear routine will help with this.

## Epilepsy Team

- Dr Irwin (Consultant)
- Dr Hill (Consultant)
- Lisa Devine (Paediatric Epilepsy Nurse Specialist)

### Team email address

[asp-tr.paediatric.epilepsy.service@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.paediatric.epilepsy.service@nhs.net)

### Telephone

01932 726640/01932 723692

**Safety in and around the home:**

It is important to ensure that your child is supervised around water at all times. For older children who require privacy always ensure that they shower instead of having a bath, doors should remain unlocked and you are aware that they are using the bathroom. There is no reason for children with epilepsy not to continue carrying on with most sporting and leisure activities, it is helpful however to ensure that an adult supervisor is aware that your child has epilepsy and that they know what to do in an emergency. It is also important to ensure when swimming that the life guard or adult supervisor is also aware of your child's diagnosis of epilepsy.

We advocate teaching your child to always cross the road at a designated crossing and if they are using a bike or scooter a cycle helmet is always worn.

**Schooling:**

It is important that your child attends school regularly and the school is aware of your child's diagnosis. The epilepsy nurse specialist can offer additional support to the school by providing training sessions, writing care plans and providing support and information for Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP).

Children with Epilepsy should not be excluded from any trips or physical education and should have the same opportunities at school to all children. If the school has any worries or needs advice please pass on the Epilepsy Nurse Specialist contact details.

Useful organizations:

**Epilepsy Action:** [www.Epilepsy.org.uk](http://www.Epilepsy.org.uk)

**Young Epilepsy:** [www.youngpilepsy.org.uk](http://www.youngpilepsy.org.uk)

**Epilepsy Society:** [www.epilepsysociety.org.uk](http://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk)

**Medicines for Children:** [www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)

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Jeżeli chcemy, aby te informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić 01932 723553

Se precisa de uma tradução por favor contacte: 01932 723553

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