

Safety and lifestyle advice for children with Epilepsy In the school setting



- **Safety**
- **Swimming, sports, and other activities**
- **Medicines and lifestyle**
- **Exams and assessments**
- **Training / Care plans**
- **Risk Assessments**

There are often concerns regarding a child's safety following a diagnosis of Epilepsy. This leaflet is designed to highlight the main concerns and provide tips and advice on how to minimise these risks and ultimately allow each child with a diagnosis of epilepsy to lead as normal a life as possible.

Please note not everything in this leaflet will apply to a child and their seizure type.

All children with a diagnosis of epilepsy will need to take extra care when bathing due to the risk of drowning during a seizure. We therefore advise that children are always supervised where possible, doors remain unlocked and if possible, the child is encouraged to shower rather than bathe.

Please ensure children are supervised in the kitchen especially if they are preparing meals or cooking, this is to prevent injury from occurring if a child was to have a seizure.

Swimming, sports, and other leisure activities

Swimming in a pool with a lifeguard is safe for children with epilepsy. We ask that you always inform the lifeguard on duty. Ideally, any child with epilepsy should always swim with a family member/friend who knows what to do in the event of a seizure.

Seizures are more likely to occur when your child is unwell: for that reason, we would advise that your child avoid swimming if they are feeling unwell.

If a child with epilepsy is participating in water sports, life jackets should always be worn.

Having the opportunity to take part in sports and other leisure activities is important for children and this shouldn't be discouraged. With the correct support and safety precautions, there is little a child would need to avoid. If you are unsure, then please discuss this with the child's parents or epilepsy specialist nurse.

For some sports and social activities, a medical form may need to be provided. If this is the case, please do contact the child's epilepsy specialist nurse. Epilepsy Action have a good resource page on a variety of sports and the precautions that should be taken if you also require further advice.

<https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/living/daily-life/sports-and-leisure>

Precautions should always be taken around climbing. We would recommend that any child with epilepsy does not climb higher than

their own height and they are always supervised at parks, soft play areas or any climbing frames.

Cycling

All children should wear a cycle helmet whilst cycling or riding a scooter. If a child's seizures are not well controlled, we would advise that they don't cycle on busy roads or near rivers or canals.

Side effects of medication

Unfortunately, medication to control seizures often has side effects, these are usually more apparent when a child first starts taking medication and will settle down over time.

The most common side effects are.

- Drowsiness
- Lack of energy
- Behaviour changes
- Disturbance in sleep patterns

Consideration should therefore be given when a child's medication is commenced or increased.

Exams and Assessments

It is widely recognised that epilepsy can affect concentration as well as the processing, storage, and retrieval of information. Short term memory can be affected and may make it difficult to learn and store new information. Therefore, children may experience difficulty processing required information at the rate it is presented and may therefore miss out critical facts.

We ask that consideration is given to allow extra time in exams (normally 25%), because children may be slower in recalling information than they would be, if they were not on epilepsy medication? The child's epilepsy specialist nurse can discuss this further with you and write supporting letters which can be submitted to Ofstead or exam boards as evidence.

Training

It is important that staff complete training for Epilepsy annually and are fully up to date with their first aid training. Please ensure that the child always has access to a fully trained adult in school and on school trips.

<https://learn.epilepsy.org.uk/>

Provides free courses on "Epilepsy for school staff" and "What to do when a child has a seizure".

If a child has been prescribed Buccal Midazolam or another emergency medication you will need to make contact with the

child's paediatric epilepsy nurse to organise this. The Epilepsy nurse can also support you in care plans and EHCP's.

Risk Assessments

If you are unsure if a child should be participating in an activity you can always discuss this with his epilepsy nurse. It's always important to include children in all activities and sometimes adaptations may need to be made to make the activity safe. Always remember "is it safe? if not what can we change to make it safe?"

School Support

Research has shown that children diagnosed with a health condition such as Epilepsy are four times more likely to develop mental health problems than other young people (Young Epilepsy, 2022).

School can not only support these children by offering a safe place to learn but can also support them by having an adult buddy who works regularly with the child to discuss any worries or concerns they may have.

Websites for further information and advice:

- Epilepsy Society: <https://epilepsysociety.org.uk/>
- Epilepsy Action: <https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/>

- Young Epilepsy: <https://www.youngepilepsy.org.uk/>
- Cerebra: <https://cerebra.org.uk/>
- SUDEP: <https://www.sudep.org/>
- Child Line: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- CAMHS: <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>

If you have any questions regarding information in this leaflet, then please contact:

Mrs Lisa Smith. Roald Dahl Epilepsy Specialist Nurse on
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Paediatric Epilepsy Team on 01932 722 329

asp-tr.paediatric.epilepsy@nhs.net

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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Use the Relay UK app on your phone, tablet or PC.
You can also use Relay UK via Minicom or Uniphone.

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ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਤਜਜਮੇ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ: 01932 723553

اگر آپ اس کا اردو زبان میں ترجمہ چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم اس فون نمبر 01932 723553 پر رابطہ کریں

Se precisa de uma tradução por favor contacte: 01932 723553

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यदि आपको अनुवाद की ज़रूरत है तो कृपया इस नंबर पर फोन करें: 01932 723553

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

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