

Tips for parents

What will help my child avoid having a seizure?

The most important way to avoid a seizure is to make sure your child always takes their antiepileptic medicine.

Good general health is also important to avoid seizures. Have your child:

- Eat 3 well-balanced meals each day.
- Get enough sleep. Children should get at least 10 to 12 hours of sleep each night. Teenagers should get at least 8 to 10 hours of sleep.
- Get regular exercise. Have your child play sports or any fun activity. Talk with the doctor or nurse about safe physical activity.
- Avoid caffeine close to bedtime. Caffeine may make it harder to get a good night's sleep. Keep in mind that chocolate, many sodas and teas, and anything made with coffee has caffeine in it.
- Avoid alcohol.

It is not possible to prevent all of the things that may trigger a seizure:

- Being sick or having a fever.
- Having her menstrual period.
- Breathing too fast. This is called hyperventilation.

How can my child stay safe during a seizure?

Children may have a seizure at any time. To keep your child safe during a seizure, follow the tips below:

Water safety

- No one should ever swim alone.
- Never leave your child alone in the bath tub.
- Showers are safer than baths for older children.

Playtime

- A helmet must be worn if your child will skateboard, roller blade, ride a bike or a horse.
- Do not let your child climb trees, or play on high playground equipment.

Driving

There are laws about driving for anyone who has seizures. Talk to your healthcare team when your child is old enough to drive.

Health Care

As your child gets older, help them to learn to take part in their own health care.

- When your child is age 8, tell your child that their care providers will start to ask them questions directly. This will help your child get used to answering questions while they have the “safety net” of a parent in the room.
- Help your child learn to take an active role in their care at home. Gently encourage independence, but know that it will take time.
- When your child is 14, encourage them to see the team without you for most of the visit. You should join your child and care providers at the end of the visit to review information. This will also give you a chance to ask any questions or address concerns you may have.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.