

Epilepsy least two or  
more unprovoked  
seizures before



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Epilepsy is a disorder that causes the brain activity becomes irregular leading to seizures or periods of strange behavior, loss of sensation, or little awareness. They can last for a few seconds or a couple of minutes. There is no age gender or race specifically affected by epilepsy. Everyone has an equal risk of developing the condition. There is a wide range of types of seizures. There are generalized seizures, partial seizures, and absence seizures. Each affect the patient in a different way. some may stare into nothing for a short period of time and on the other hand some rapidly twitch their limbs.

having one seizure does not directly translate to the patient suffering from epilepsy. There must be at least two or more unprovoked seizures before a doctor will diagnose them with the condition. For most patients the cause of their epilepsy can not be found but when it is identifiable the common causes are brain injury, genetic influence, brain conditions, infectious disease, injury before birth, and developmental disorders. Common symptoms of epilepsy include temporary confusion, staring spell, uncontrollable jerking movement of the arms and legs, and loss of consciousness or awareness but there is specific symptoms for each kind of seizure. Generalized seizures happen over the entire brain. These seizures cause the patient to make random noise their limbs will move in a rhythmic pattern and they may even appear to have trouble breathing and become pale. Partial seizures affect only one region of the brain so the only the part of the body that is affected is that part of the brain of that controls it.

These patients usually have twitching in one specific area of the body. They may smack their lips or pick at their clothes and appear dazed or confused.

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Absence seizures happen mostly in children. They may lead to impairment and confusion often leading to the patient staring blankly. Repetitive blinking or small movement are also common. These seizures are short and could happen many times in one day.

A few diagnostic tests used to find epilepsy are neurological exams. This exam will check the patient's actions, motor abilities, and mental function. Blood tests are also taken to see if there are any signs of infection, genetic conditions, or other problems that cause seizures. An EEG is the test commonly used to diagnose epilepsy. In this test doctors attach electrodes to the patient's scalp. The electrodes record brain activity.

The EEG will pick up on problems with the impulses in the brain and can help the doctor figure out the type of seizure the patient is having. A high density EEG can be used as well. The process is the same except that the electrodes are placed closer together to get a more precise view of the area that is causing the seizures. CT scan uses X-rays to get cross-sectional images of the brain to show abnormalities that cause seizures. An MRI uses strong magnets and radio waves to create a detailed view of the brain that lets the doctor view lesions or abnormalities. A spinal tap lets a doctor test CSF which allows the doctor to test for disorders of the central nervous system that may involve the brain. These tests and many others are used in the diagnosis process. There are many treatment methods for epilepsy.

Most people with epilepsy can become seizure free by taking one anti-epileptic medication. Other combination medications decrease how often seizures occur and the intensity of them. It is also important that the patient

takes their medication correctly. Surgery becomes the next alternative when medication does not work. Neurosurgeons will take out the part of the brain that is causing the seizures when the area is small, well defined, and does not affect with vital functions such as speaking, motor function, vision, and hearing. Therapies are also a good form of treatment. One therapy in particular is vagus nerve stimulation.

In vagus nerve stimulation doctors implant a device under the skin of the patients chest, sort of like a pacemaker. Wires from the stimulator are connected to the vagus nerve in their neck. The device sends a surge of electric energy through the vagus nerve and to the patient's brain. The device usually reduced seizures by 20- 40 percent. another form of therapy is the ketogenic diet. In the diet the body breaks down fats instead of carbohydrates for energy absorption. After a few years some patients may be able to quit their ketogenic diet under the watch of their doctor and stay seizure free.