

BEING A TEEN

WITH PARTIAL-ONSET
SEIZURES

Your teen years are a time when you may start being more independent, and that may include working with your parents and doctor on how to best manage your partial-onset seizures.

Epilepsy is an individual condition; how partial-onset seizures affect you can be very different from how they affect someone else. Knowing how they affect you may help you share this information with your parents and doctor.

Be sure to tell your parents and doctor how you're feeling and how your treatment is going so they can help if you have any concerns.

This booklet covers some topics that may help you stay on track with your treatment plan.

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For resources to help with talking to others about your partial-onset seizures, visit epilepsy.com and talkaboutit.org.

Talking to others about your partial-onset seizures

You can help others understand that partial-onset seizures are just one part of who you are. Your parents or caregivers can help you figure out the best way to help others understand your condition.

If you're interested in sports or other school activities, your coaches and teammates should know you may experience seizures (talk with your family and doctor first to make sure it's OK for you to do that activity). Tell them what your seizures look like, and what to do (or what not to do) if you have one. You may also want to wear a medical alert bracelet so your medical information is available if anything does happen.





Working with your doctor

It's important for you and your parents to work with your doctor. This will help your doctor find a treatment plan that may work for you.



Keeping a seizure diary can help you track your seizures and note any changes in their pattern. It will come in handy when talking to your parents and doctor about how things are going.

Many restaurants will make adjustments to menu options, so don't be afraid to ask.



Healthy eating

According to the Epilepsy Foundation, some research has shown that improving the nutritional content of your diet may improve seizure control in some people.¹

Following a ketogenic diet (a special high-fat, low-carb diet) may help lessen your seizures. Doctors may recommend a ketogenic diet for people whose seizures have not responded to several different seizure medicines.² Talk to your doctor to determine if a ketogenic diet may help you.



1. Nutrition and seizure control. Epilepsy Foundation website. <https://www.epilepsy.com/living-epilepsy/healthy-living/healthy-eating/nutrition-and-seizure-control>. Accessed September 29, 2017. **2.** Schachter S, Kossoff E, Sirven J. Ketogenic diet. Epilepsy Foundation website. <https://www.epilepsy.com/learn/treating-seizures-and-epilepsy/dietary-therapies/ketogenic-diet>. Accessed September 29, 2017.



Setting a reminder on your computer or phone is one way to make sure you take your medicine every day at the same time.³



Staying on track with medication

Taking care of yourself includes taking your medicine exactly as your doctor prescribed it.

Relating another daily habit with taking your medicine, like brushing your teeth, can help you remember to take it at the same time every day.³

3. Strategies and tools for taking medication. Epilepsy Society website. <https://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk/strategies-and-tools-taking-medication#.Wc5yA0pSyu4>. Accessed September 29, 2017.

Knowing your seizure triggers

A seizure trigger is something that can cause you to have a seizure. Keeping track of events that may be related to your seizures in your seizure diary, especially what you were doing leading up to a seizure, can be helpful in determining your seizure triggers. Some possible triggers are noted below. Talk to your parents and doctor about any triggers you notice.

Sensitivity to light

For some people, seizures can be set off by flashing or flickering lights or moving patterns like stripes or checks.⁴ If this is a trigger for you, be mindful when watching TV, playing computer games, or using your smartphone.

Loud noises and too much excitement

Loud music, theme park rides, and crowds can raise your excitement levels or stress levels, or may be tiring, which for some people could trigger a seizure.⁴

Being overtired

Staying up late to study may lead you to sacrifice sleep. But lack of sleep may be a seizure trigger for some people.⁵

4. Sports and spare time. Epilepsy Society website. <https://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk/sports-and-spare-time#.WcwCVUpSyu4>. Accessed September 29, 2017. 5. Sleep. Epilepsy Society website. <https://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk/sleep-epilepsy#.Wc50lUpSyu4>. Accessed September 29, 2017.

Driving

When it comes to driving, every state has different laws and regulations. Make sure to look up your state's driving regulations and discuss them with your doctor and parents first before determining if you can drive.

If you can't drive, talk to your doctor and parents about taking public transportation or paratransit services. You can find out about paratransit services by calling the county transit authority where you live. When applying, be sure to explain why partial-onset seizures are preventing you from using the regular bus system. A note from your doctor may be helpful, too.



You can look up your state's driving regulations at epilepsy.com/driving-laws.



Education

Whether you're in middle school, high school, or thinking about going to college, school is probably a big part of your life.

A law called the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) aims to make sure you are treated fairly by everyone involved in your education. But you may still face some obstacles. Knowing your rights may help. You can learn more at ada.gov.⁶

According to federal law, you cannot be denied education because of your seizures.⁶



⁶. Americans With Disabilities Act website. <https://www.ada.gov>. Accessed September 29, 2017.



THERE'S SUPPORT OUT THERE IF YOU NEED IT

Remember, you are not alone. There are many young people living with partial-onset seizures. Talking about your concerns may help, and there are lots of ways to connect with other people and get support.

Be sure to let your doctor, parents, and other important people in your life know if you need support.

**For additional resources and to find out
how you can connect with others living with
epilepsy, visit the Epilepsy Foundation at
epilepsy.com.**



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